The Verity of Christ's Resurrection from The Dead

THOMAS COOPER

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THE VERITY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

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THE VERITY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD

AN APPEAL TO THE COMMON-SENSE OF THE PEOPLE

BY

THOMAS COOPER

Author of "The Bridge of History over the Gulf of Time," "God, the Soul, and the Future State," "Plain Pulpit Talk," "The Purgatory of Suicides," "The Paradise of Martyrs," etc., etc.

SEVENTH THOUSAND

London

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TO

JOHN HOUGHTON, Esq.,

OF

SANDFIELD PARK,

WEST DERBY,

LIVERPOOL,

THIS VOLUME IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY

INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

IN pursuance of the purpose expressed in the Prefaces to my "Bridge of History" and to "God, the Soul, and a Future State"—I herewith publish the substance of four lectures on the Resurrection of Christ, which I have delivered, wholly or in part, in almost every important town of England and Scotland, during a period extending over the last eighteen years.

I have again thought it better to put what I have spoken into a bookish form, for general readers. But, I have, as before, preserved the familiar and conversational tone—the interrogative and repetition—with the occasional light step-aside into other themes by way of relief—in short, the *policy of speech* that must be employed by all

who wish to secure the earnest and prolonged attention of the working-classes to lectures on serious subjects.

Besides, I humbly think it desireable that the soldiers who come after me should know how I strove to conduct the fight. The battle with Scepticism will not be ended for many a long year after I quit the field. I pray that Victory may sit on the helm of the Christian combatants who have to follow me!

THOMAS COOPER.

2, *Portland Place,*
St. Mary's Street, Lincoln.
April, 1875.

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THE VERITY

OF

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

IF the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead be a veritable historical fact, it is the most commanding fact in the chronology of the world. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead be a true substantial historical fact, it is of more importance to you and me and every child of man, than any event that ever occurred since the world began. The coronations of kings and emperors—the glittering pageants of princes—the grand pontifical high masses performed by mitred prelates, in lofty cathedrals, amid the pealing of Te Deums, to celebrate the victories of conquerors—the long processional pomps, in gold and jewels, of royal and imperial and ecclesiastical dignitaries—all the

spectacles of magnificence and gorgeousness and grandeur which could possibly be displayed before our eyes would be worth no more than the gew-gaws of children compared with the verification of the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead. No historical fact can equal this, in value, for us: no revelation of discovery, ancient or modern, can compare with it in real importance.

If the founders of the pyramids could burst their mummy-cases, and be clothed again with flesh and blood, and could stand before us, and tell us how those mighty piles were raised, how long it is ago, and for what purpose they were used;—if all the proud kings who reigned in Babylon and Nineveh could pass, in stately file, before us, and pronounce their own names, and tell us of the battles they fought and of the peoples they conquered;—if the builders of our own Stonehenge could rise from the dead and present themselves to our amazed sight, and tell us why those mystic stones were erected on Salisbury plain—who reared them—how long it is ago—and for what purpose the wondrous circles were used;—the sum of the stories of curiosity and interest thus rehearsed to

us would not equal, for us, in value, the verification of the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead.

If an angel could descend from heaven and shew us the meaning of every prophecy contained in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets;—who should unfold to us the exact and complete meaning of every chapter and verse and line and word of the Book of Revelation;—who, turning to the beginning of the Bible, should tell us all that we desire to know about the primeval creation and Man's fall;—who could tell us where was the Garden of Eden, and whether all the living races of men are descended from one Adam, or whether there have been several Adams, as some contend;—and who could assure us whether Noah's flood extended over the whole earth, or only over a part of it, and could describe to us every circumstance of the Deluge, so as to clear up every difficulty that any of us now feel in the reading of the Bible account of it;—the sum of all the interpretations and revelations made to us by the angel, would not equal for us, in value, the verification of the

historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead.

If some mighty man of science could arise, transcending in powers of analysis and proof, of induction and discovery, all the men of science who have gone before him,—who excelled Liebig, and Faraday, and Davy, and even Herschel, and Newton,—some marvellous discerner of the secrets of Nature, who could tell us what Electricity is, and Light, and Chemical Affinity—who could reveal to us why the loadstone attracts iron, and why the needle points to the pole—and why, when we join thin plates of copper and zinc, or silver and zinc, and surround them with a liquid acid, we create a force whereby we can transmit messages across the Atlantic, at the rate of one hundred and ninety thousand miles in a second;—all the combined story of astonishment the mighty man of science could display in our hearing would not equal for us, in value, the verification of the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead.

If some gifted seer could arise, filled with clear and certain visions of the future, who could tell

us what will be the condition of our beloved England five hundred years hence;—what will be the changes on the continents of Europe and Asia in all those years;—whether more and more wars of devastation will be waged by France and Germany, and whether Russia will seize India from us, and thus reduce England to an inferior power;—whether America will dominate the world;—what will be the condition of China and Japan and Australia and New Zealand, and what the destiny of Africa;—and if the gifted seer could multiply the interest of all he revealed to us, tenfold, by informing us with what speed men will travel a thousand years hence;—whether the use of steam will be superseded by some new motive power, and, if so, what that power will be;—whether such increase of magnifying power shall be won for the telescope as to enable men to discern the real nature of the sun, and to ascertain that the nearer planets are inhabited;—above all, what will be the forms of human society a thousand years hence—whether they will still be competitive, the many being subordinates and the few the privileged, or co-operation will become the rule;—the whole

sum of the varied and exciting relations made to us by the seer could not equal, for us, in true and substantial value, the verification of the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead.

Nay, if all the darling children of Genius could awake from the dead, and tell us in rapt and ecstatic syllables of all the thrilling joy they experienced in their wondrous creations;—if Raffaelle, and Michael Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci, and Titian, and Corregio, could stand before us, and tell us of all the rapture they experienced in the creation of their marvellous pictures;—and Handel could shout aloud the joys he felt in the creation of his grand Hallelujah Chorus, and 'For unto us a child is born,' and 'Worthy is the Lamb,' and the Hailstone Chorus, and 'The horse and his rider';—and Mozart could tell us what he felt, when dying at thirty-seven, he said 'Now I begin to see what could be done in music';—and the grand, old, bald, blind Homer could rise and tell us of the ecstasy he felt in forming his war-ballads of the 'Iliad;' and Milton could stand beside him and reveal the rapture he felt in the composition

of the 'Paradise Lost';—and the unequalled, the unparalleled Shakspere—the sweet English face we could, above all, delight to see—could delight our ears with the tale of all the thrilling emotion he experienced in the creation of his 'Hamlet' and 'Othello', his 'Lear' and 'Macbeth';—not the entire combined story of the rapture and ecstasy, of the joy and delight, experienced by the children of Genius in the creation of their marvellous works would equal, for us, in real and substantial value, the verification of the historical fact that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead.

For,—we all have to die.

SHALL WE LIVE AGAIN?

The Progressive nature of Man,—as we endeavoured to shew, the other night,—is strong presumptive evidence for a Future Life. The Almighty's creation of Man with intellectual powers so expansive, with yearnings for knowledge so sateless—merely to live here and live no more—looks like an abortive work. It seems so unworthy of Himself, that we reject it.

But the Moral nature of Man—the existence of Conscience, in him—the dictate of the Moral

Sense, that Virtue deserves praise and reward, and Vice blame and punishment, and yet Virtue so often suffers and Vice so often triumphs, in this life —seem to unfold the awful truth, beyond question or denial, that there must be a future life where Virtue is triumphant and Vice suffers,—or the Equity of God, the Moral Governor, would be left in question. Conscience proclaims to Man that, for him, there must be a retributive 'hereafter'!

"Ay," says the sceptic, "I have heard all your reasonings from the Progressive nature of Man, and I have listened to your preachments about Conscience and the Moral Nature:—I have heard all you can say, and the assertion of your own belief that there is a retributive 'hereafter.'

"But when I first entered the chamber of death, and gazed on the form of her whom I loved, and saw her lie breathless, speechless, lifeless—when I called, but there was no answer—when I wailed, in my bitter agony, but there was no response—oh, how vain seemed to me, all your preachments about conscience and the moral nature and all your dreams of a 'hereafter'!

"And when I followed her fair corpse to the

churchyard, and saw the open grave, and the fragments of mouldered coffins and human bones, strewed about—and a skull—fleshless, eyeless, tongueless—oh, how vain seemed to me all your dreams of a Future State!

"I cast my last look at the coffin which held the form of her I loved, and I said in my heart—'Fare thee well! I shall see thee no more for ever! But it matters not. I, myself, shall soon be gathered to the dust, and they will cover me up from all human sight, and I shall forget, and soon be forgotten. I have but one cold consolation:—If I cease to be, I shall cease to weep!'"

Thank God, that is not the state of mind and feeling with which a Christian turns from the grave, when he has cast his last look at the coffin which holds the form of the beloved and departed dead. He remembers that it is only the clay tabernacle which is coffined there. It was fair to look upon, in life; but God has taken it down—and its freed tenant has escaped to bliss. He looks forward to the happy meeting and re-union in the land beyond the grave. He turns away from the coffin and the grave to recommence his pilgrimage that may now

be solitary—but it is with an echo around him of the exultant words to which he has just listened—the grandest words that ever were spoken on earth, for doubting man:—

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE! HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE; AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE!"

"Ay," rejoins the unbeliever, "those words of Christ would be the grandest words ever uttered in the world, for doubting man—if they were true. But I cannot believe them. I cannot believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Resurrection and the Life: I cannot believe that he did, really, rise from the dead."

Hearing that unmistakeable avowal of unbelief, we go on to observe that

I.

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT AND DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOLLOW, IF JESUS ROSE NOT FROM THE DEAD.

1. IF Jesus rose not from the dead, we shall scarcely find any man's belief in a Future State to be sufficiently strong to influence his conduct. You may reckon up all possible items of our progressive nature, and dwell for hours on the great and undeniable fact of our moral nature and sense of responsibility, and yet find men unconvinced and unmoved morally. I have known a few Deists in my time. Not many in late years—for, it is a most serious fact that the prevailing form of unbelief in these days is negative Atheism. Unbelievers do *not* say—"Sir, there is no God: I am quite sure of it." But they say "You cannot prove that there is a God, and no one can prove it. I do not say that there is no God. I merely say, I

know nothing about it." Neither do the free-thinkers of the present day say "Sir, I affirm that there is no future state for man." But they say "You cannot prove that there is a future state, and no one can prove it. Nor does any one return from the dead to tell us. I merely say, I know nothing about it. I give all such questions the go-by. I am a Secularist—that is to say, I concern myself about the present life, and leave others to their dreams about the future."

Such is the scepticism of this present time; but, fifty years ago, the prevailing form of unbelief in this country was Deism. Of workingmen, especially, hundreds were worshippers of Thomas Paine, and zealous readers of 'The Age of Reason.' And when you talked with such men, they readily avowed their belief in the existence of an Almighty and All-wise Maker. But if you asked them whether they believed in a future state for Man, they replied that there *might* be one, but they could not say they *believed* there was one.

I never, in my life, found a man who really believed in a future state, unless he believed that Christ rose from the dead. And none of you will

ever be likely to find a real believer in a 'hereafter,' unless he be a believer in the resurrection of Christ. Our only certainty of our own resurrection is the *certainty of faith*, and our best foundation for that faith is the reality of the resurrection of Christ.

2. Again: if Christ did not rise again from the dead, the Christian believer's experience is all a dream. His belief that he is accepted and pardoned for Christ's sake, becomes sheer delusion. For if Jesus rose not from the dead, there is no proof that he has paid our debt—that his atonement for Man's sin is accepted. Christ 'died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.' But, if Christ be not risen again, no Christian believer is in a justified state. "If Christ be not raised," says St. Paul, "your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins."

3. Again: if Jesus did not rise again from the dead, we have no warrant for our observance of the Christian sabbath: our 'Lord's Day,' as it is called in our Acts of Parliament: the first day of the week. We do *not* keep the Jewish sabbath: the sabbath instituted amid the thunders of Sinai, and which the Jews have observed, in all countries

where they have sojourned, for more than three thousand years—commencing at six o'clock on Friday night in each week, and ending at six o'clock on Saturday night; or, in some countries, and at certain times of the year, commencing with the observance of the first star which appears on Friday night, and ending with the observance of the first star which appears on Saturday night.

I say we do *not* keep the Jewish sabbath—for that is the Jew's day of mortification and irksomeness and tormenting restraint. A Jew dare not wipe a knife, or light a fire, or light or snuff a candle, on *his* sabbath. He has to hire the *Gojim* —the gentile—to perform such services for him. Persons who have lived in Jewish families have told me of the restraint—the burdensome and miserable restraint experienced by young Jews, during the hours of our Saturday afternoon, and how eagerly they have looked for the appearance of a star as their sabbath was drawing to a close, —and, above all, how joyously they have shouted 'There it is!' when a star appeared; and then, gaily, ran off to business or amusement.

The true Christian knows no irksome sabbath.

His 'Lord's Day' is a day of heartfelt cheerfulness. When he wakes in the morning, it is with the feeling of thankfulness that the day has returned, and of gladness that it is to be devoted to God's service.

But our only warrant for keeping the first day of the week, as our Christian sabbath, is the tradition that the early Christian church kept it, as it has been kept ever since, in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. In the year one hundred and seven of our era—only seventy-four years after Christ's crucifixion—Pliny writes to the Emperor Trajan concerning the persecution of the Christians in the provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, and tells him that the Christians are wont to assemble early in the morning on a certain day of the week, and sing hymns to Christ as their god. And Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, and other fathers who follow, tell us that this 'certain day of the week' was, from the beginning the *first* day of the week, because their Lord rose from the dead on that day. Let it, also, be observed that there was a tradition in the early church, that

whenever Christ appeared to his disciples during the forty days he tarried on earth—*if* it were *only* on earth he tarried—he always appeared on the *first* day of the week: seeming to give a commencement of its observation, himself. And the truth of this tradition seems highly probable from what we read of our Lord's appearances in the New Testament.

4. Again: if Jesus of Nazareth did *not* rise again from the dead, then he did not speak truth—for he said—"Destroy this temple (his body) and in three days I will raise it up"—"The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and they shall slay him, but in three days he shall rise again." If, therefore, Jesus did not rise again, he must have been either a deceiver, or a mistaken enthusiast; and, in either character, he could not have the sincere attachment of any of us, who are in earnest.

5. Lastly: if Jesus Christ did *not* rise again from the dead, then Christianity is not true. The fact of the resurrection of Christ has often been fitly described as the keystone of the Arch of the Religion itself: pull out the keystone and the

Arch tumbles into ruin. And thus if His resurrection be not a truth, Christ's religion is untrue.

But, then, comes the difficulty of all difficulties. How to account for the existence of Christianity at the present time, if the religion be not true? It is—as I observed to you, in another lecture, the established and professed religion of three hundred and thirty-five millions of the human race. Not of the savage or uncivilised nations—but of the nations who have the power and commerce and science and literature of the world. How is it that these millions profess the Christian religion? How came Christian churches to be built—of which there are some hundreds of thousands in the world—some of them dating many hundreds of years back? A few years ago, Dean Stanley delivered his interesting discourse at the celebration of the eight-hundredth anniversary of the opening of Westminster Abbey. King Edward the Confessor, we learn from our national history, was to have been present at the opening, but was prevented by sickness, and died a few days after the opening. We might as well doubt that such a king as Edward ever lived as doubt that fact.

Only a few months ago, they were commemorating the twelve-hundredth anniversary of the opening of Ely Cathedral.

I might go on to mention the dates of other ancient Christian buildings, and to shew how the dates are bound up with many important facts in history. How does it happen that there are thousands of ancient coins bearing symbolical marks of Christ's religion? If Christianity be not true—if the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead be not a veritable historical fact—where did the religion come from?

Theories have been devised to account for the existence of the religion, without granting it to be true; and theories have been devised to account for the story of Christ's resurrection, without granting it to be true.

To assist your memories, as I said that Five important and disastrous consequences would follow, if Jesus rose not from the dead, I go on to say, that

II.

FIVE THEORIES HAVE BEEN DEVISED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND FOR THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, WITHOUT GRANTING EITHER TO BE TRUE.

1. THERE is the old Sun Theory: the theory which would persuade us that no such person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed: that he is only a personification of the Sun, like the Sun-gods of the old Hindoos, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and other ancient nations. It is the old fable of Nature remodelled, this theory asserts: the fable which is so old that no one knows who devised it, or when it began to take possession of the rude minds of early men: the fable which is still mixed up with all religious beliefs, and will continue to be mixed up with them, even when the maturer human mind disregards all other fables.

The Sun sets and rises again; and so, allegorically, Christ is represented as dying and rising again from the dead. The divine child was born on Christmas-day, at mid-winter, during the shortest days: another personification of the Sun, which is born and re-commences his yearly course from the shortest days.

I need say no more to you about the Sun Theory; for many of you have heard me expose its fallacy, again and again. And those among you who have never heard my lectures on the Historical Evidences of Christianity, can learn how I treat the worn-out Sun-theory, by reading my little book, entitled 'The Bridge of History over the Gulf of Time.'

2. I mention the theory of Woolston, Morgan, and other 'old English Freethinkers,' as they are usually called, with a sense of shame. They did not hesitate to pronounce Christ to be a wandering impostor—a vagabond pretender—who went about professing to heal diseases; and affirmed that his disciples were only his knavish accomplices!

Thank God, such ribald and vile detraction of

the Saviour's character is no longer the fashion with sceptics. The leading sceptical writers on the Continent seem to vie with one another in extolling the beautiful moral teaching of Christ, and in enthroning the beauty of his moral example. And how far the sentiments of our living freethinkers differ from those of the old English Freethinkers may be understood by but two sentences in the last chapter of 'Supernatural Religion'—an anonymous book issued only a few months ago, and understood to be a text-book among what are called 'scholarly and advanced free-thinkers.' These are the two sentences :—

"The teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or even attainable, by humanity. The influence of his spiritual religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity of elevation of his own character."

The scurrilous theories of Woolston and Morgan and the rest not only set out with representing the Saviour as an impostor and his disciples as his accomplices in deceit; but they maintained that Christianity has been propagated and established in the world by a succession of impostors and

dupes: the ministers of the various sects of Christianity. They also strove to impress their own generation with an idea of their own merit, as men that would open people's eyes who had been long deceived; but they were answered by men of their own generation, and their books have passed into desuetude.

3. A third theory is also derived from the old freethinkers; a theory so absurdly improbable that it might have passed into oblivion, had it not been taken up and clothed with new attractions by some of the German sceptical writers. I may just say, too, in passing, that I observe Mr. Voysey has taken up this theory: Mr. Voysey, the clergyman who lately insisted on keeping his living, and yet teaching unbelief from the pulpit—on administering the sacraments of the church, and yet instructing his flock that their faith in Christ was vain:—the clergyman who gave the poor Archbishop of York so much trouble in trying to get quit of him, without hurting him!

The theory is this: that Jesus did not die on the cross: that he merely fainted away; and that the aromatics, or spices, in which Nicodemus and

Joseph of Arimathea wound him served to revive him. Also, that his friends doctored his wounds, and that he crept about by night and shewed himself to his disciples—not daring to be seen in the day-time, lest he should be again seized, and crucified afresh!

I shall have to recur to this theory, as we go on. At present, let me say how I pitied Mr. Voysey, when I read the sermon he preached at St. George's Hall, on Easter Day, 1873—in which he maintained this most absurd scheme. What!—a poor creature whose wounds had been doctored, creeping about to shew himself and his wounds, by night, and by stealth, give force to the grand triumphant declaration that Jesus had risen from the dead, and ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, and had received gifts for men, even for the rebellious! What! martyr after martyr—men and women—young and aged—suffer themselves to be stoned in the street—lashed with the scourge—slain by crucifixion, fire, or wild beasts—and all for their belief in a poor creature who stole about by night, in fear, to shew to his disciples his doctored wounds! What an absurd story! Who can

help treating it with contempt, and wondering that any man who was reckoned intelligent should either have broached it, or maintained and defended it?

4. Concerning a fourth theory I shall need to say very little, for I never learned that it had more than one advocate: its author—Charles Hennell of Woodford, the writer of 'Christian Theism.' Hennell's theory is—that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, when they saw that Jesus was dead, and his Messiahship was no longer credible with them, resolved to secure the corpse for decent interment, out of respect to Jesus. But when they observed that the women came to look about the sepulchre, and when they heard that Jesu's disciples remained in Jerusalem, they took alarm—for they had concluded that the women and disciples would hasten away to Galilee, in fear, when their Master was crucified. Hearing, also, rumours that Christ's saying was abroad—that he would rise on the third day—they became further alarmed. If these men take it into their heads to affirm that their Master is risen—thought these two members of the Sanhedrim—and the notion spreads until

Jerusalem is in an uproar about it, *we* shall be brought into trouble: it being known that we were disciples of Jesus.

So, thinks Hennell, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea laid their heads together to deceive the disciples and make them hasten back to their homes. Accordingly, the sepulchre was opened in the night and the body of Christ removed and secretly buried; and a young man with a long white garment was placed in the empty tomb, to counterfeit an angel, and to tell the disciples that their Master was risen, and they were to hasten back to Galilee—for Christ would meet them there!

Hennel thinks that the disciples were poor, ignorant, sincere creatures, who believed it was an angel they had seen; and that they went forth teaching that their Master was risen from the dead. The credulity of mankind, Hennell is of opinion, will account for the spread of their story, and the establishment of Christianity in the world.

Such is the theory of Charles Hennell; and it is so whimsical and foolishly improbable, that I need say no more about it.

5. Lastly, there is the theory of my old master, Strauss: the theory I have striven to disprove, also, in my 'Bridge of History.' I may describe the theory of the 'Leben Jesu' in few words. Strauss holds that the story of Christ's resurrection originated in the heated and fond fancies of the disciples, who, he thinks, fled back in haste to Galilee, with natural fear, when their Master was slain. That, in the warmth of their enthusiasm, they, after some time, ventured to return to Jerusalem, and there proclaimed that Jesus was risen from the dead. That their enthusiasm was infectious, and spread quickly among the multitude; and the authorities, deeming the new fancy would soon die out, let them alone till the superstition gained so much strength that they could not quell it—and thus it has continued to live.

In the 'Leben Jesu,' Strauss also denies that we know *who* wrote the Gospels, *when* they were written, or *where* they were written;—treats Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as merely imaginary authors of the Gospels;—holds that various fragmentary accounts were collected, and formed into what are called our 'Gospels,' about

the middle of the Second Century—or one hundred and twenty years after the Crucifixion;—and maintains, that in these hundred and twenty years, there was ample time for what he calls the 'mythical' stories of our Gospels to grow up.

I think it unnecessary to draw your attention to the names of Renan and more modern writers, because their theories of unbelief are really built on the critical foundation of Strauss.

III.

LATER HYPOTHESES AND SCEPTICAL REASONINGS OF STRAUSS.

THE 'Leben Jesu' of David Friedrich Strauss was the work of a young man of only seven-and-twenty years of age; yet it produced a very powerful perversive effect on the minds of thousands of scholars and thinkers. Happily, many of these have thrown off the yoke of what was once deemed his 'inexorable logic'; but the logician himself did worse than merely hold by his own 'inexorable' reasonings, and descended into positive Materialism and Atheism. He has lately died in the strong avowal of his darkest unbelief, at the age of sixty-six. We must leave him to the All-wise Judge, and must ever remember that we have no right to pronounce the final sentence on our fellow-man: that pertains to God, as His rightful office, alone.

During his later life, Strauss issued two works—a 'Life of Jesus for the People,' and 'The Old Faith and the New.' By the 'New Faith,' he really means no faith, at all. He tells us that there is no God and no hereafter; that we ought to cease to call ourselves Christians; and that there is nothing left for us to worship but the Universe. Such is the lamentable error he proclaims in his latest book!

In the 'Life of Jesus for the People,' Strauss strongly maintains that we have but *one contemporary witness* to rely upon for the appearance of Jesus after his death—and that is the apostle Paul. He will not have it that any part of our Four Gospels contains the testimony of a contemporary witness. He treats the names by which they are called as labels put upon them by imagination; and thus denies that Matthew and John give us any witness at all:—or Mark, or Luke—for we have no writing which we know to be verily theirs. Paul, he holds, is our sole *contemporary* witness.

None of the German sceptics (neither Renan) be it observed, question the reality and activity of the life of St. Paul. They hold indeed—if I were

to express what they think in rough English—that this eager, busy Paul was the fellow who wrought all the mischief which has lasted to this Nineteenth Century; and that we should, most likely, have never heard of Jesus of Nazareth, had it not been for Paul: Paul, who restlessly went up and down amid the cities of the Lesser Asia and of Greece, and along the shores of the Mediterranean, teaching and preaching the new superstition, in spite of persecution and imprisonment and suffering.

Strauss,—and some other German sceptics, as well as Renan,—seems to have a somewhat high intellectual estimate of St. Paul. He seems to regard the great apostle as one of those strong, energetic spirits who appear, only now and then, in the course of centuries,—and who draw thousands into their own bond of enthusiasm while living, and mark out the path in which thousands will follow when they are dead.

Strauss looks at Paul displaying his native energy, first, as the Jewish zealot—brought up at the feet of Gamaliel—a Hebrew of the Hebrews—a Pharisee of the Pharisees—holding the clothes

of Stephen's murderers while they stoned him to death—procuring letters from the chief priests—and going forth in quest of Christian offenders, and dragging men and women to prison. But Strauss holds that this seemingly strong, unrelenting man, like all other large intelligences, had a soft place in his nature. When he sees the Christian mothers in prison, with the iron chain about them, suckling their babes, and joyously singing hymns to Christ, Paul's heart is stricken with remorse. When he sees the Christian martyrs, walking in fetters and lashed with the scourge as they pass along the streets, yet singing exultant strains of Christian faith, Paul's heart quails with the thought that these men may be right after all, and that his part as a persecutor, is deeply criminal

"Perhaps," thinks Paul, "I am wrong and these sufferers are right. I almost thought the face of Stephen did shine like the face of an angel, as they said it did, when I heard him cry 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' And perhaps he did see Jesus 'standing on the right hand of God'—just as our fathers saw spiritual sights!"

But stifling such thoughts and reproaching

himself for entertaining them, he sets out, with assistants, for Damascus, on his errand of persecution. And, now, Strauss thinks he sees the full interpretation of all that is said to have happened. A violent storm of thunder and lightning hurls Paul and his companions to the ground, and—with his mind and heart all in inward storm and conflict between doubt and remorse—Paul imagines, amid the peals of thunder, that he hears a voice saying 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And he cries out 'Who art Thou, Lord?' and imagines he really hears the voice reply 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest'—while, amid the vivid lightning he imagines Christ appears to him in brightness, and summons him to be a disciple and preacher of the faith he has persecuted.

And this energetic Paul, it was, that wrote the Epistle to the Romans, the two epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Galatians. Such is the conviction of Strauss. Renan holds that Paul also wrote the two letters to the Thessalonians; and, from his Roman prison, the letters to the Ephesian, Philippian and Colossian churches, and the letter to Philemon. And though

unequal to Strauss in logical power, Renan is, undoubtedly, a more profound scholar.

And this Paul, contends Strauss, is our only *contemporary* authority for the story of the Resurrection of Jesus: more explicitly, for the story of the appearance of Jesus after his death. And in the first epistle to the Corinthians, Strauss points us to Paul's own statement (chap. 15, vv. 3—8):

"For, I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Kephas, then of the twelve; and that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once—of whom, the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And, last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

"*Last of all he was seen of me also*"—but what kind of *seeing* was this of Paul? asks Strauss. And he answers his own question, by affirming that Paul's seeing of Christ was not like our daily

and hourly seeing: it was not seeing by the use of the outward eye: it was not *objective* seeing, says Strauss: it was only *subjective* seeing.

Belike, some of my audience may not be skilled in the lingo or jargon of the men who, by eminence, are called 'thinkers.' Let me observe, then, that such writers and speakers are much in the habit of employing terms peculiar to themselves. They commonly talk of the 'abstract and the concrete'—the 'object and the subject'—the 'objective and the subjective,' and so on. Thus, they term what we see with the outward eye 'objective vision,' while the term 'subjective vision' is used by them to denote either an image of something that we summon up to the mind's eye, as we say, voluntarily—or an image beheld involuntarily by the mind, when we happen to be very highly excited, and which, though it seems to be real is only imaginary.

Now, Strauss asserts that Paul saw nothing outwardly—nothing real—when he was stricken down by the storm of thunder and lightning, on his way to Damascus: it was only a figure of Christ seen by his mind while he was in a state of very high

excitement: the sight was involuntary, and it was merely an instance of 'subjective vision.'

Mark the next stealthy step of the astute logician. "Remember," says he, "that Paul classes his own *seeing*, and the *seeing* of others, *all in the same category*. So he must mean that the vision of Kephas, and of James, and of all the rest, was, like his own, merely *subjective*"!

With the testimony of the Four Gospels before us—the testimony which, by serious investigation, we hold and believe to be true testimony—we feel that this is too impudent an attempt to steal a march upon us. What!—ten men (or eleven when Thomas was present) all take to dreaming, with their eyes open, that they saw a person stand in the room with them, and heard him speak, and saw him eat, and yet he did not stand there, at all! One man may fancy he sees what he does not really see, if he be in a state of very high excitement; but ten or eleven persons sitting in a room are not likely to get into such an abnormal state—all at once—and altogether. And when many persons are excited together they do not see the same imaginary sights.

Sceptics charge Christian believers with credulity but that sceptic must be credulous indeed who can persuade himself that the ten or eleven apostles could all fall to dreaming, with their eyes open, that Jesus stood in the room where they were sitting; that he spoke to them at considerable length, and ate in their presence, after they had handled his body—and yet he neither ate nor spake, neither did they handle him or see him—for he was not with them, at all. This is all so utterly foreign to all human experience—so utterly impossible—that, I repeat, that sceptic must be credulous indeed who can believe it.

IV.

ALLEGED CONFUSION IN THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

"BUT, sir, I object to the divarications in the Resurrection-story," some one will say: "it is like trying to *un*ravel a skein of ravelled silk. If one were to grant that it is most probable that your Four Gospels were written by the persons whose names they bear, how can you expect us to give unyielding credit to an account which is so full of intricacy and irreconcileable difficulty?"

I grant, at once, that the Four Evangelists are *not* what is called *skilful* historians. One would never think of comparing them with the masters of historical method—with Hume and Gibbon and Grote, for instance. But I contend that the difficulty of combining the fourfold testimony of the Evangelists into one consistent narrative is not so great as some people say it is. How many of

the people who object to the ravelled state of the narrative have tried to disentangle it? If half the effort were made to unravel the difficulties in the Gospel narrative, which is often made by a company of clerks to correct the week's account in a bank-ledger, the 'divarications' in the last chapters of the Four Gospels would soon vanish. What quiet patience—what calm, strong, fixed attention men display in reckoning money, and in setting the account clear between debtor and creditor! If there were half the intensity of patient, deep attention shewn in men's pursuit of Truth—in the endeavour to overcome scriptural difficulties, and see our way clearly through them—how soon the task would be accomplished!

"Scriptural difficulties, sir!" exclaims the sceptic, indignantly,—"why has the scripture any difficulties at all? Tell me that, sir. If 'Holy Scripture,' as you call it, be what you say it is—a Revelation from God—why is it not a volume remarkable for its plainness and unmistakeable clearness, instead of being full of these 'difficulties' that you are compelled to acknowledge it contains? Why, for instance, was there not given to us one

clear, simple statement of the facts—if they be facts—of Christ's resurrection, instead of four conflicting accounts?"

I ask that sceptical friend to remember the saying that "from the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." No fact is held to be so well 'established' by a single testimony, as by several. By multiplicity of testimony there is held to be corroboration of fact. It surely is very unreasonable to complain of a book because it aims to strengthen the evidence for a fact, by giving us four testimonies for it instead of one.

"I tell you, sir," again says the sceptic, "that there can be no corroboration of a pretended fact when it is related by four writers who contradict each other."

I reply that the Four Evangelists will *not* be found to contradict one another, in their narratives of Christ's resurrection, if their accounts be patiently and honestly examined.

"Patiently!" exclaims the sceptic—"why, it seems mere mockery to use such a word. Wherefore is any patience needed? You say your scriptures are Divinely inspired. Then, sir, they ought to agree perfectly and completely. I say,

perfectly and completely—for you will never persuade me that God would inspire one man to write an account of Christ's resurrection one way, and inspire another man to write it another way."

Then, to secure such a perfect and complete accordance as you seem to demand—I reply to the sceptic—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John should have written the same number of chapters, the same number of verses, the same number of lines, the same number of words—and the very same words. And, then, if you had brought such a volume to me, I should have felt much inclined to knock it about your ears, and to say 'You dunce, do you call this a copy of the Four Gospels? It is only one book printed four times over. I pray you take it away!"

Suppose four witnesses come into a Court of Justice. The first witness waits for no question from the barrister, but delivers all he has to say in a strong voice that cannot be overpowered by all who call upon him to cease. The second witness is equally irregular, will answer no question, nor make any pause, and, moreover, there is no novelty in his testimony.—What would the Court say?

"My lord," the leading counsel would say to the judge, "this man is repeating the very words of the first witness."

"I believe he is," declares the judge.

"Stop, sir!" cries one barrister after another. But the man will not stop. He will finish his story—and it is, word for word, the story told by the first witness in the case.

Suppose the third witness to proceed in the same way, and his voice was so stentorian that he could not be silenced, one can imagine how the Jury would touch one another's elbows, and say "These fellows have been at great trouble to get the same tale by heart; but what noodles they must be to imagine that we shall believe them the more for their silly cunning."

If the fourth witness ventured to come into Court, and essay to rehearse the same tale, word for word, we feel sure that the indignation would be general;—and, whether this last witness could or could not be silenced, judge, barristers, and jury would agree to dismiss the case.

I thought some of my audience who have, most likely, been hard at work, both with head and

hand, throughout the day, were becoming drowsy. So I stepped out of the strict highway of the argument, in order to awaken them. And, now, let us return to our serious theme.

We know of no doctrine or theory of Divine Inspiration—or, at least, we acknowledge none—which would necessitate our regarding the Four Evangelists as mere penman-machines: mere writers-down of word after word, dictated to them word by word, by the Holy Spirit. God moved them, and guided them, we believe; but He did not destroy their separate identity as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, any more than He superseded their own voluntary action of mind.

We, therefore, read the Four Gospels with the expectation to find, in them, indications of the individual mental constitution or habitude, or other intellectual peculiarities of their writers—just as we expect to find marks of idiosyncrasy (I would not use so long a word, if I knew a short word as suitable)—marks of idiosyncrasy, in other writers.

I venture to affirm that the accounts of our Lord's resurrection in these Four Gospels will be

found to form a consistent narrative, if the accounts be investigated and examined without prejudice. Let it be clearly understood that while I call upon you to listen to me, as I endeavour to set these narratives before you cleared of what some hold to be insuperable difficulties—I shall urge on your acceptance no explanation of an apparent difficulty that may be deemed far-fetched, fanciful, or improbable. I shall, simply, suggest such explanations as any candid investigator of common history would suggest. I beg of you to keep this in mind; and to remember that it is only by employing such modes of explanation as are common in the critical investigation of history, that I shall claim your assent.

V.

REMARKABLE ACCORDANCE OF THE EVANGELISTS IN THEIR RELATION OF THE CHIEF EVENTS PRELIMINARY TO THE RESURRECTION.

FIRST, let us observe that all the Four Evangelists give us the positive information that Jesus foretold to the disciples, his death and his resurrection from the dead. The scourging and the spitting and insult are also foretold. The passages are many and I cannot quote them: you must read them for yourselves. And mark, I entreat you, how strictly the passages accord. There are no 'divarications' to be reconciled here. All is most severely accordant.

These sorrowful foretellings of the Saviour confounded the disciples: 'they understood not that saying, and they feared to ask him': and again 'they wondered what the rising from the dead should mean.' Their preconceived notions

of Christ's temporal Messiahship and its outward grandeur caused them to shrink from the idea of their Master being put to a shameful death. And the thought of his 'rising from the dead,' left them in helpless wonder. We cannot feel any surprise at all this, when we think how fixed and rooted the belief in a temporal Messiah must have been in the minds of the disciples, as it was in the mind of every Jew.

Their failure to understand and receive what their Master said is not the most important matter for our attention. The fact we have to do with is, that Jesus plainly foretold his betrayal into the hands of sinful men—foretold his crucifixion—foretold his death—and foretold his resurrection on the third day: that he foretold that all this should be real—a real death and a real resurrection from the dead on the third day. All the Evangelists, I repeat, are fully agreed that Christ foretold all this: there are no 'divarications' to be explained, or reconciled, here.

Secondly, we have to point to the remarkable accordance of the first three Evangelists—'the

synoptics,' as it is the German fashion to call them—in their narratives of the betrayal, the capture, the mockery, the trial, the scourging, and the crucifixion of Christ. The darkness over the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour is related nearly in the same Greek words, by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The lifting up of the sponge with vinegar, our Lord's cry, the words of the centurion, the rending of the veil of the temple, are also given with most remarkable accordance.

Some of you who are listening to me may think that there is nothing so very remarkable in the accordance I am speaking of. You may suppose it a very common case to find such accordances in history. But, I beg to assure you that you are very much mistaken, if you think so. I have been a reader of history, from a child; and, in the course of my life, have read almost every history that I could lay my hands upon; and I declare to you that I feel I could challenge any man to produce, to my eye-sight, any account of the public trial and execution of a public character, so wondrously and circumstantially recorded, by several historians, and with

such accord, as is this account of the public trial and execution of Jesus of Nazareth, by the Evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke. I beg your close attention to this fact.

Those among you who have not read much history may be surprised when I tell you, that nothing is more commonly to be found on its pages than *real* 'divarications' which are inexplicable, in the narratives of public trial and execution of public characters. I may point you to the familiar instance of conflicting and irreconcileable statement in our own national history, respecting the death of the great Argyle, in the reign of Charles the second. Lord Clarendon, who became Lord Chancellor of England, and must, one would think, have had the clearest sources of information, declares that the Marquis of Argyle was condemned to be hanged, and that the sentence was executed the same day. On the other hand, Bishop Burnet, with Woodrow, Heath, and Echard—three scholarly historians,—affirm that he was tried and condemned, on Saturday, to be beheaded; but that the sentence was not executed till Monday. Up to this

moment, no one can affirm whether Argyle was hanged or beheaded, and whether he died on Saturday or Monday.

Think of the uncertainty in which we are left respecting the time and manner of the death of a public man which happened in our country only two hundred years ago, and then think of the clear and distinct accordance of Matthew, Mark and Luke in narrating the crucifixion of Christ, which occurred more than eighteen hundred years ago!

"Stop, sir!" some caviller will be inclined to cry out; "how can you assert that there is so perfect an accordance in the narratives of Christ's crucifixion? Why, sir, they don't agree in so simple a matter as the inscription on the cross. In one we read that it was 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews'—in another that it was, simply 'The King of the Jews'—in the third that it was 'This is the King of the Jews'—and in the last that it was 'Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.'"

A very little learning will explain all that, my friends. And, remember, workingmen—for it is

to you I always address myself—remember that it often needs a little learning to enable a man to explain a difficulty. Don't make the foolish speech which I so often heard from London sceptics when I contended with them, during those twenty-one months, nearly twenty years ago—"Give us no more of your learning—your Latin and Greek—to explain difficulties: it is only an attempt to trick us." I call such speeches foolish—because I feel sure if workingmen will call to mind that these Gospels were written well on to two thousand years ago, and were written in ancient Greek, which is now a dead language, they must perceive at once that some little learning, at any rate, is needed to explain the difficulties we think we find in them.

I keep in mind that I said I should not offer to you any explanation of a difficulty, but such-a-one as I should offer to explain a difficulty in common history. And now I beg of you to call to mind how it is stated, in two of the Gospels, that the inscription on the cross 'was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin.' St. Matthew, undoubtedly, quotes the Hebrew inscription——

"The Hebrew inscription, sir!" interrupts some sceptical workingman, impatiently, "why, surely you don't mean to tell us that it is at all probable that Pilate would express what he meant in three or four different ways! Pray, sir! in the name of common-sense, don't try to persuade us that the inscriptions in Hebrew and Greek and Latin were unlike. The words in the Hebrew must have been represented by words of exactly the same meaning, both in the Greek and the Latin."

My reply to that workingman is—My dear friend, I must beg of you not to be offended, when I tell you that you do not understand Language, as a study, or you would not say what you have just now said. Words are *not* always represented in one language by words of exactly the same meaning in another language. Some of the young ladies in this assembly are, doubtless, readers of French, and they will assure you that you could not, *in one word*, say '*twice*,' in that language. There is no single word in French which means *twice;* and that is the reason why a Frenchman who speaks broken English will tell you that he did a certain act '*two times*.' Then, there is that

peculiarity of expression called 'idiom,' in every language; and words are not always arranged, in one language, in the same order as they are in another: in English we should say a black man; but it would be 'man black' in many other languages; and if a Latin scholar had to tell you how he had to read a passage in Cicero, he would, perhaps, shew you that he had to begin with a word at the head of the passage and then to go seven or eight lines farther down the page for the next word—the verb—without which he could not read the passage, at all.

Let me say again—Matthew undoubtedly quotes the Hebrew inscription. He wrote for Jews. You will see that to be perfectly clear, if you read him closely. Chrysostom tells us he wrote his gospel at the request of the Christian church in Jerusalem; and the early Fathers tell us he wrote it in Hebrew: of course they mean the Hebrew spoken in our Lord's time—the Syriac, as we call it now.

Mark—you will learn by proper enquiry—writes down the substance of Peter's preaching, being Peter's interpreter at Rome and elsewhere. So

Mark would not copy any of the inscriptions, Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. He would give the *sting* of the inscription, just as Peter gave it, in his preaching: 'the King of the Jews.'—"What do you mean by calling that the *sting* of the inscription?" some of you may ask. I will tell you. You will remember how Pontius Pilate is described as being most unwilling to condemn Christ—how he strives to release him—and how he publicly washes his hands, according to Matthew, to shew his innocence of the blood of Jesus—and how, at last, Pilate was *stung* into action by the cry 'If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend!' That cry warned Pilate that the Jewish priests and rulers meant to impeach him to the Roman emperor and senate, if he did not comply with their blood-thirsty demand. So he condemns Christ, and *stings* the priests and rulers in return, by placing an inscription over the head of Christ which describes the crucified Saviour as 'the King of the Jews.' See how they fume when they have read the inscription! They know that the transaction will be reported, in full, to the Roman emperor and senate, by Pilate; and

their long-standing bad character for rebellion be thus increased.

"Write *not*, 'The King of the Jews,' say the chief priests to Pilate, "but—that *he said* 'I am the King of the Jews.'"—"What I have written I have written," was the stern and scornful answer they had from Pilate. He discerned that they had been plotting his ruin; and this inscription above the cross was the beginning of his counter-plot. He knew that when the report of the transaction was read at Rome, it would be said, immediately, either in the Senate, or by the imperial secretaries—"This Pilate is just the man to hold the reins tight among these rebellious Jews: he has crucified another of their pretended kings."

The evangelist Luke is the most classic writer of the Four, and it is most probable that he gives us his Greek version of the Latin inscription. 'Rex Judæorum hic!' it would read, in scornful style: literally, 'King of the Jews—this!'

John, writing thirty years after the three other evangelists, and in the polished Asiatic-Greek city of Ephesus, would quote the Greek inscription,

which would be full and flowing, according to the genius of that most beautiful language: 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'

I have occupied a longer time than may have been thought necessary, by some of you who think it but a petty and unworthy cavil to object to the difference in the inscriptions over the head of the crucified Christ. But experience has taught me that it is better to remove the smallest causes of cavil from the minds of workingmen, than to let them go unanswered. In this instance I have only given such an explanation as I should have given to clear away a similar difficulty in common history; and I have given it because I believe it to be the true explanation.

To resume: it was to the remarkable accordance of the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, concerning the betrayal, capture, trial, and crucifixion of Christ, that I was endeavouring to secure your attention. I did not mention John, for a reason that will be evident to you if you spend a little time in comparing him with the other three. He would, undoubtedly, have the Gospels of 'the synoptics' before him, and so

only felt it his duty to fill in their triple narrative, as it were, with such facts as they had left unnoted, while he would deem it needless to go through all the painful story step by step, as fully as they had done. He would see no reason to add testimony where there was already testimony enough, and such clear and concurrent testimony, too.

But, let it not be thought that the beloved disciple was to take no important part in completing the Gospel narrative. At the risk of being thought credulous, I declare to you that I regard it as a blessed special providence, that the loving disciple stood by the cross at the death of his Master, and was thus able to give us this most important testimony :—

"Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true, *and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.*"

Might believe what? Why does John use such peculiar words? *Might believe that Christ was really dead:* that it was not a sham death, nor a case of fainting or swooning. Had Jesus been alive when the Roman soldier pierced his side with the spear, the blood—which would have been running its rapid course through the heart, arteries and veins—must have gushed out in a torrent. But Jesus was dead and his blood was 'setting' as we say into congealment. So there came forth only a little blood (*not* a stream) with water. The soldier's spear had pierced the heart and the pericardium or bag which holds it, and in which there is a portion of water. Such was the opinion of Erasmus and Beza; and the highest modern physicians corroborate it: they say that John's peculiar narrative attests the death of Christ in the most remarkable manner. And I cannot help thinking that the soldier who pierced the Saviour's side was a veteran who was accustomed, thus, to test the fact whether a crucified person were really dead.

Thirdly: I entreat you to observe the like remarkable accordance of the Four evangelists, in

their narrative of the circumstances of Christ's burial. They each and all give us the name 'Joseph of Arimathea,' as that of the rich man, and honourable counsellor, who went in and begged the body of Jesus, from Pilate; they each and all tell us the body was wrapped in linen; two of them tell us the sepulchre was hewn out of a rock; two of them say 'man had never been lain' in it; and another calls it 'new'; and two of them say a stone was rolled to the door of it: a 'great stone,' says Matthew.

"But why do not the other two evangelists mention the stone, I want to know, since you assert there is so great accordance among them?" says another sceptical critic.

I reply that the other two evangelists *do* mention the stone—only they defer the mention of it till they have to relate that the women found it rolled away when Christ was risen. And *then*, let it also be observed that Mark corroborates Matthew by calling it a 'very great' stone.

John gives us the particular information that Nicodemus assisted in the burial of Christ.

"But Matthew, Mark, and Luke know nothing

about that," cries out another objector—"do you call that accordance?"

I answer that you have no ground for saying they *knew* nothing about it. If you had said that they *say* nothing about it, you would have been right. I will give you the reason why they say nothing about it. It is because Nicodemus (the shy, timid ruler who 'came to Jesus by night,' not having the courage to come in the day time) would be unwilling to let his name be published, in his life time. When John wrote his 'supplementary gospel,' as it is often called,—so long after the others—no doubt Nicodemus was dead; and there was now no motive for John to withhold the mention of his name. I should have given the same explanation of this alleged difficulty, had it occurred in the pages of common history; and I give this explanation, also, because I believe it to be the true one.

Lastly: I beg of you to observe how the first three evangelists relate, with perfect accordance, that the Galilean women beheld the sepulchre, and how Jesus was laid.

VI.

WHY MATTHEW ONLY TELLS US OF THE WATCH AT THE SEPULCHRE.—COWARDLY CONDUCT OF THE SANHEDRIM.

BEFORE we pass on to consider the fourfold narrative of the Resurrection contained in the Gospels, we will, if you please, attend to the account respecting the watch at the tomb, which is related by Matthew only——

"And why by Matthew only?" demands another sceptical hearer.

Because Matthew wrote for the Jews, as I said to you before; and this story about the disciples stealing the body of Jesus out of the tomb while the guards slept was circulated among the Jews, only. Matthew felt it to be his duty to contradict the false story, and to rehearse what he learned to be true about the experience of the guards,—especially, as he knew that the false story was yet

in circulation among the foreign Jews. Nay, Justin Martyr, in the second century, relates that the Sanhedrim sent agents among the foreign Jews, to propagate it. And Celsus, the opponent of Christianity, repeats the false story, also in the second century. But the story was so silly, and so self-contradictory, that the later Evangelists did not think it worth insertion in their narratives, which were intended for Gentile reading more than for Jewish: in other words for readers who had never heard of the story, and who would only think it worthless when told.

The enemies of Christ, who were always marking his words, and seeking to 'entangle him in his talk' and make him commit himself, had marked his saying, as often as he had uttered it—that if they slew him he would rise in three days. The simple disciples had also heard Christ's prophetic declaration; but they 'wondered what the rising from the dead should mean': indeed, they do not seem to have had the slightest perception of its real meaning. The chief priests suspected that there was some design in Christ's saying,—for they regarded every word he uttered as the

word of a deceiver, and regarded his own person with the bitterest hatred. So they come to Pilate and tell him of their suspicion as to the design in Christ's saying, and that they fear his disciples may steal his body away by night and then give it out that he is risen from the dead. Although they assure Pilate that they feel much apprehension of mischief, he does not seem to pay them much regard, and dismisses them, as before, with scornful brevity: 'Ye have a watch: go your way! make it as sure as ye can!'

'Ye have a watch,' the commentators conclude, means—'There is the constant and ordinary watch in the tower of Antonia—take as many men from it as you think you need!' And they set the watch and sealed the great stone: sealed it, most likely, with the great seal of the Sanhedrim. Nothing is told us; but we may imagine the soldiers pacing, in grim array, with their swords in their hands, up and down the rocky pavement of the garden, before the sepulchre, through the night until near the dawn. Suddenly, there is an earthquake, and the angel of the Lord appears, rolls back the great stone from the door, and sits

upon it. 'His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.'

When they recovered their senses, they would not see the angel: he would be no longer visible to them; but they would run from the sepulchre in terror—one may say in common English—as fast as their legs would carry them: none of them, we imagine, having courage enough to look into the sepulchre, before they departed. Most likely the Sanhedrim would send a messenger to go and look at the empty tomb, when they had heard the statement made by the Roman guard. The messenger would return and tell them that there was no corpse in the tomb.

And, now, what do the Sanhedrim?—what are their real convictions? The soldiers have, doubtless, been keenly questioned, and they all declare they kept their watch most faithfully. And there they stand—some of them looking pale, yet; and none of them manifesting any signs of guile. If they were all Romans they would describe the supernatural personage they had seen, as one of

the gods. The chief priests cannot treat their story with contempt—but what were the real convictions of the Sanhedrim?

Many of them, no doubt, were so confounded that they could not announce any clear conviction. But I hold it to be beyond a doubt that some among them would openly avow their belief that the Magician, the great deceiver, who was in the habit and practice of casting out dæmons by Beelzebub the prince of the dæmons, had escaped death by a compact with the Evil Spirit, who had really rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre to release him. These stronger and more malign minds would not be able to persuade the other members of the Sanhedrim, at once; and so the scheme would be resorted to of bribing the guards to tell a false tale. They gave the watch 'large money'; and they would have need to do so—for the watch would not think themselves secure from punishment, by the promise which the Sanhedrim gave them to 'persuade' the governor, if it came to his ears, and to secure the watch from his anger. The guards would feel certain that Pilate would put them to death, if they said

they had slept on guard—for that was death, by Roman military law.

If any members of the Sanhedrim did believe that the dead body of Christ had been stolen, why did they not insist on a strict enquiry? Why were not Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus summoned to the bar of the Sanhedrim, and compelled to answer the most searching enquiries? Summoned! Most likely they were present at this very meeting of the Jewish supreme council—and from *them* Matthew had all the items of his narrative; but their behaviour would manifest their entire innocence—nay their evident concern and alarm would increase the alarm and confusion of others.

To hush it all up!—that was judged to be the wisest proceeding—for a guilty feeling would be predominant with, perhaps, the greater number of them. Might not Jesus have really risen from the dead? What evil had he done?—as Pilate demanded of them. Had they not sinned greatly in compelling Pilate to condemn him to be crucified? Their hearts had often quaked when they heard of him—when he rode into Jerusalem and

the crowd shouted 'Hosanna to the son of David'; and when they heard that he had raised Lazarus to life; and when they were told of other mighty miracles which he had wrought. But they had stubbornly resisted conviction—ay, with a stubbornness of which Jews alone are capable!

If one could allege no other reason for God's selection of the Jews as His peculiar people, one might find a commanding reason in their strength of character. Oh, of what strong stuff the Jews are made! How ineffaceable is the whole type of the Jew! His very physiognomy is the same in all ages. Witness those pictures in our British Museum, copied from Egyptian monuments which are three thousand years old! His immoveable obstinacy is the same now, as it was of old. The Romans had more trouble with the Jews, when they had conquered little Palestine, than ever they had with any people whom they brought under their yoke. The Jews were always rebellious. And no persecution, however fierce, in the Middle Ages, could break the adamantine strength of Jewish character. And its strength is as vigorous as ever: in the acquirement of wealth, in states-

manship, in learning, in criticism, in science, in art—above all in the divine art and science of music, and in superlative powers of song—the Jews either vie with the foremost, or are the foremost themselves! Have we not a Jew *premier?* I ask, could that man have won his way to such an elevation, in this old land of prejudice and privilege, if he had not been a man of real genius, and of extraordinary force of character?

I repeat, the Sanhedrim stubbornly resisted conviction, although Jesus gave them the clearest proofs of his true Messiahship; and now, they give 'large money' to the soldiers to say that Christ's disciples stole his dead body from the tomb while they—the guard—guiltily slept! It was a most absurd proceeding—but they could devise no way out of their difficulty, except trying to hush up the truth.

"Say, His disciples stole him away while we slept." Say, that you knew what was being done while you were fast asleep! Say, that you think the disciples must have stepped on tip-toe, when they removed the stone, for they did it without noise, or it must have awaked you! What the

soldiers were to say when other questions were asked, they were not instructed to say. How was it the clothes were left in the sepulchre?—some would question them. Since the thieves must have been in a hurry, why did they not run away with the corpse wrapped up in the grave-clothes as they found it? What could the disciples of Christ do with his dead body? How could their possession of it answer any purposes of imposture? Could they shew it publicly and say—"Look! do you not see that he is risen from the dead?'

The silliness of the story was not seen by those who invented it—for their confusion and fear and malignity blinded them. But we see it, now; and we cannot wonder that so foolish a story was soon worn out, and that, after Matthew had alluded to it, it was passed by, in silence, by the other Evangelists.

VII.

TWO REMARKABLE FACTS CONSIDERED: THAT NO MAN SAW JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD; AND, THAT HE APPEARED ONLY TO 'CHOSEN WITNESSES.'

LET us not hasten on, and miss one serious reflection. Be it strictly observed that there is no record of any one seeing the Saviour rise from the dead. We are sure that no human eye saw Christ rise from the dead. The Roman guards beheld the terrible countenance of the angel who descended from heaven and rolled back the huge stone from the door of the sepulchre; and, then, they swooned away with fear. They did not see the Saviour rise. Nor did the mighty angel come to release Jesus from his deathly prison; but, to open the tomb that all who came to look for him might see it was empty.

Bishop Beveridge speaks of "two angels who,"

he says, saw Christ "not only risen, *but rising*, and assisted him in it, rolling away the stone." But there is no Scripture for this. Whether any of the angels saw Christ rise, we cannot tell. And what time the glorious Second Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity raised that human body, took it out of the sepulchre, and joined it again to the human soul, and—for ever—to His Own glorious Divinity, we cannot tell. And whether by the human hands of the risen Saviour, or by the ministration of angels, those grave-clothes were folded together, and that face-napkin was 'neatly wrapped up' and laid in a place by itself, and not with the linen clothes—we cannot tell. The Son of God, who declared of His Own life—"I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"—took away his raised body from the tomb, in a way, and at a time, that we know not of.

But we cannot be surprised at this. We could not expect that human eyes would be permitted to pry curiously over the very act of the bodily resurrection of Christ. I say, we cannot be surprised at the great negative fact that no human eye saw the Saviour rise from the dead—for it is in strict

keeping with all God's great procedures in Nature. You examine your own limbs;—you mark the fitting of the joints, and the ordering of the sinews and muscles and nerves and arteries and veins in your own body;—and you scan the bodies of the animals; and you say,—reasoning by analogy—and reasoning most infallibly, too—"What wondrous design and contrivance!"

But—the wondrous Designer Himself? We cannot see Him. Matter attracts matter, and the loadstone especially attracts iron, and various metals have affinities for other metals. But what is attraction?—what is chemical affinity? We cannot tell. We cannot see either. What is this force we seem to create by placing slices of copper and zinc, or silver and zinc near one another, and surrounding them with a liquid acid, so that we can send a message through a wire at the rate of 190,000 miles in a second? We cannot tell. We cannot see it. How does the Mind—Ourself—use the brain and nerves, to see and hear and smell and taste and feel? They tell us we ought to call it Nervous Force. But what is it? We cannot tell. We cannot see it.

Oh, how often, as we glance at the great realm of Nature, and feel ourselves set fast with its multitudinous wonders and mysteries, we feel compelled to cry out, in the language of the ancient prophet—'Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself!' So it is here. No man sees Christ rise from the dead. God leaves man to collect the evidence for himself, as He does in the great realm of Nature. The Maker of all things is essentially invisible. We see His works, and we must gather the great truth of His existence from them. So it is here. We must gather the evidence for the truth of Christ's resurrection for ourselves. What are our materials?——

"Stop, sir!" cries out again, one of our sceptical friends; "how can you expect me to believe that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead, if there be not a single eye-witness of the actual fact? Oh, sir, if his resurrection were really of so much importance to us all, as you so emphatically proclaimed it to be in your introduction, I should have thought it would have been emblazoned on the page of history as such an incontestable and well-witnessed fact, that no one could possibly have

doubted it. I should have expected that a most glowing and triumphant statement would have been handed down to us, in history: how all Jerusalem was awoke by an earthquake—that legions of angels were beheld in the sky, proclaiming, with harps and trumpets, that Jesus was about to rise—that all Jerusalem saw him burst the tomb, and ascend in splendour—and then, that he himself and the angels slowly faded from human sight, as they went up to heaven!"

And what would your favourite historical critics, with their astuteness, and acumen, and so on, have said to such an account, my sceptical friend?

"Oh!" they would have cried, "this is a wilder story than even the flight of Elijah, in the fiery chariot! What monstrous romance! They who wrote such a story—so utterly unlike all human experience—could only expect it to be believed by dotards and children. A fine tale for the nursery, certainly."

No, no! God's word does not furnish us with any flashy and startling record of the resurrection of His Son, in order to win our reliance upon the truth of the fact. None of them saw Christ rise;

but He manifested Himself *after* His resurrection to "*chosen witnesses*"—"To whom" says Luke, "He shewed Himself alive, after His passion, by many *infallible proofs*, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

"But why to *chosen witnesses?*" asks again our sceptical friend.

Because, if the witnesses had been any sort of people, they would have been no witnesses, to us. Just think a little, I beseech you, good friends. What kind of witnesses do we really *need* for such an unique fact as the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead? The unspeakable importance of such a fact leads every one of us to demand that the witnesses shall have two great qualifications: they must be moral characters of the most exceptional sincerity and uprightness; and they must be able to testify without mistake.

No one could give us testimony of any value who did not know Jesus of Nazareth. If Jesus had appeared in a large, mixed crowd in the streets of Jerusalem, many who had seen him

before might not have been able to identify him, and some would not have known him, at all.

And, suppose Jesus had shewn himself to the priests, and members of the Sanhedrim, who brought him to trial—what kind of treatment would he have received from them? Just such kind of treatment as Dr. South shrewdly points out, in one of his sermons: they would, if they recognized him, have given immediate orders to seize him, and drag him away again to crucifixion. And, then, he would have freed himself from their wicked power, by vanishing out of sight. And what would his enraged and disappointed persecutors have said, then? — "Oh! this is the great magician—the deceiver—the impostor, who casts out dæmons by Beelzebub the prince of the dæmons! This appearing to us, and vanishing in a moment, is one of his old magical tricks!"

This is what they would have said, as surely as you and I are alive. They were fixed in their resolve *not* to believe in Him. The only Messiah they would believe in must be a conquering Messiah: one who could banish the

Romans, and set up a grand temporal kingdom. They would not have the Crucified One, with his spirituality and purity—even if he had risen again from the dead. Therefore, if Christ had shewn himself to them, as the risen Messiah, it could have answered no good purpose. Christ knew that; and so he said to them, openly, and before they seized him to crucify him—"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; for, I say unto you, that ye shall not see me, henceforth, till ye say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

We see the reason why Christ appeared only to *chosen witnesses*. It was for the reason that Bishop Sherlock alleges: that they might be *good witnesses:* that is to say, witnesses who had familiarly known the Saviour, who had travelled with him, eaten with him, listened to his teaching over and over again, day by day, during the three years of his teaching: witnesses who knew him so well that they could not possibly be mistaken, and suppose it was the same Jesus of Nazareth they had formerly known, if it were really some other person. They who were the

chosen witnesses were, in all these respects, the *good* witnesses we need.

"The wisdom of God," says the great Samuel Clarke, "provided as many unquestionable witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ, as the nature of the thing required; as was sufficient to make the fact incontestable; as was satisfactory to any reasonable and unprejudiced person. To work *more* miracles for the sake of obstinate and vicious unbelievers, God was not obliged. And, if He *had* done it, the objection would still have increased without end. For, if it was not sufficient that Christ shewed Himself openly to a *number of witnesses*, but it had been necessary that he should appear personally to the *whole* city of Jerusalem,—for the same reason it might be fancied necessary that he should have shewn himself to the whole *Jewish* nation; and, for the same reason, to all other *Nations* likewise; and to these, *in every age of the world*, as well as in one age; and that, to *every single person*, it one miraculous appearance were not sufficient, he might have shewn himself *often* and with *more* miraculous circumstances; and so on, without end. Which shews plainly the

unreasonableness of all such expectations, when men are not satisfied with that evidence which is fit and sufficient in its kind."

And now, let us proceed to consider the record which contains the testimony of the *chosen* witnesses.——

VIII.

SOME MINOR CONSIDERATIONS PREPARATORY TO A SURVEY OF THE RECORD WHICH CONTAINS THE MOST VITAL PART OF THE EVIDENCE.

"NAY, sir," once more interrupts some sceptical friend, "I shall demur to your going on, till you have cleared up another difficulty which you seem purposely to have shunned, as if you did not like to tackle it, lest you should fail. It may be that you think the difficulty of no importance; but it seems important to us who are *not* believers"——

Go to the point, at once, friend, and tell us your difficulty, be it great or small.

"You know, sir," proceeds our friend, "that your Gospels say Jesus declared that he would rise again 'in three days,' or 'on the third day'; and, in your First Gospel, Jesus is strangely represented as declaring that 'the Son of Man'—him-

self—'should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' Now, sir, tell me, in plain, honest language, and without any shuffling, how you can make it out that Christ spoke the truth,—since all of you tell us he died about three o'clock on a Friday afternoon, and rose again some time on a Sunday morning. According to our common English reckoning that would only amount to one whole day, a part of another day, and two nights."

Depend upon it, my friend, you *shall* have an answer in plain, honest language, and without shuffling. You talk of our common English reckoning; but I beg of you to remember that it is *not* an English reckoning with which we have to deal. I call upon any workingman, who is present to-night—however sceptical he may be—to listen to me with candour. You know *we* did not make the ancient languages, and *we* cannot be accountable for any method of reckoning time that was in use by any ancient nation. Many of their usages differed from ours; and among the rest, their way of reckoning time.

Suppose any of our kings reigned ten years and

one week—we should say he reigned ten years. But, in the ancient canon of Ptolemy, which scholars reckon to be a most valuable piece of ancient chronology, the odd week entitles the dead king to be set down as having reigned eleven years. It was a prevailing custom among ancient nations to reckon in this manner.

Ask any Jew in London how his people reckon the days with regard to the practice of circumcision. You read, in the Pentateuch, that the child must be circumcised on the 'eighth day.' How do they reckon the days? Suppose a child to be born on Monday afternoon, although the Jewish day ends, usually, at six in the evening, the short part of Monday will be reckoned one *whole* day, and the child must be circumcised on the following Monday. *We* English folk call that period a week, or seven days; but the Jewish reckoning makes it eight. You know we cannot alter this: their custom has lasted for ages; and we must be content to settle what we deem a difficulty, by using the Jewish method of reckoning time. I could point you to Grotius, the friend of Milton, and other learned authorities, to shew that a few hours

often stand, in the Jewish reckoning, for what we should call a night and a day—but I know that workingmen do not like to be troubled with learned references.

You must look at the fact that Jesus at the ninth hour—that is at three in the afternoon—of Friday, 'gave up the ghost, and said, It is finished'; and you must take the Jewish reckoning which would make the remaining three hours of Friday, *the first day*—that is to say a whole day: a night and a day. Then, from six o'clock on Friday evening to six o'clock on Saturday evening, is *the second day:* another night and day. And from six o'clock on Saturday evening, to the hour at which Christ rose on Sunday morning, is *the third day:* another night and day. So, as strange as it may seem to our English minds, the period would stand for "three days and three nights," to the Jewish mind.

I have given you 'in plain, honest language, and without any shuffling,' the real solution of this difficulty—which has often been presented to me by sceptical workingmen, who frequently find their greatest difficulties in what seem, to old-

fashioned Christians, very trifling obstacles to a man's reception of sound evangelical truth.

Without further hindrance, I trust we may now go on to consider the really central and important part of the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, contained in the New Testament: I mean, the record concerning the witnesses who saw Jesus after he rose from the dead. This record is contained in the last chapter of St. Matthew; the first eight verses of the last chapter of St. Mark; the last chapter of St. Luke; the two last chapters of St. John; several passages in the Acts; and one passage in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians.

Some of you may feel a little surprise that I have limited the record in St. Mark to the first eight verses of the last chapter of his gospel. I do so, from what I believe to be sound reasons. The last twelve verses in our common English version of St. Mark are not found in that most ancient manuscript, the Vatican; neither are they found in the Sinaitic, the very ancient manuscript recently discovered by Dr. Tischendorf. They are marked as 'doubtful' in several manu-

scripts. The verses are not in the style or manner, and, often, not in the language, of St. Mark's Gospel.

For some reason—perhaps, because he was suddenly seized, and put to death, with St. Peter, at Rome, during Nero's persecution of the Christians—Mark seems to have left his Gospel unfinished; and some other hand added these twelve verses, that his Gospel might not remain an incomplete record. There can be no doubt that the twelve verses are very ancient, for one of them is quoted by Irenæus, in the second century; and the twelve verses are found entire in the Alexandrian manuscript, which is held to be of the fifth century. I might have passed by these twelve verses without any remark. But, as I had resolved not to make any use of them, in our discussion and consideration of the Gospel narrative, I feel it is better to give you my honest conviction that they are *not* a part of the original Gospel of St. Mark I have not come to this conclusion rashly; but after some research and much consideration—and I, therefore, give you my clear conviction, without hesitation or doubt.

Let no one judge me, as making too free with the Divine record. I yield to no Christian man in my reverence for it. I should dread to say or do anything which would tend to unsettle any man's faith, or lessen any man's reverence for the Bible, as a Divine revelation. But, a blind and undistinguishing reverence is mere superstition. No really intelligent Christian can esteem the Gospel of St. Mark to be of less value *without* the twelve verses in question, if he be satisfied that they form no genuine part of it.

I ventured to make an observation to you, a little while ago, which some of you, whose religious feeling is the deepest and most tender, might also judge to be somewhat irreverent. I ventured to say that the Evangelists were not *skilful* historians. And I think now is the time to give you an instance in proof of what I mean. You will find it in the opening of the last chapter of St. Matthew.

To a hasty reader—a reader at first sight—Matthew seems to mean that the women were present at the door of the sepulchre, when the mighty angel descended and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His account is an instance of want of

method. And yet his account is no more immethodical than accounts transmitted to us by other ancient writers. When you think over Matthew's account—when you judge of it as you would of a passage of common history—you feel sure that Matthew does not, and cannot mean, that the women saw the mighty angel roll away the great stone from the door of the sepulchre. And yet some lordly and learned men seem to imagine they did. Listen to a passage from one of proud Bishop Horsley's sermons on the Resurrection :—

"St. Matthew's women saw the whole process of the opening of the sepulchre, for they were there before it was opened. *They* felt the earth-quake ; *they* saw the angel of the Lord descend from heaven ; *they* saw him roll away the vast stone which stopped the mouth of the sepulchre, and, with a threatening aspect, sit upon it ; *they* saw the sentinels fall down petrified with fear."

Did they ? Then how was it that *they* did not 'fall down petrified with fear' ? If Roman soldiers —men of bone and muscle and sinew—some of whom had, perhaps, faced death in sturdy battle—were affrighted and swooned away—how could

weak women sustain the vision of the angel whose 'countenance was like lightning'? As one would say, it would have frighted them out of their five senses—ay, fifteen senses, if they had so many. We feel sure that Matthew does not mean, and cannot mean, that the women saw the angel roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Horsley was a giant in controversy, and an imperious giant, too. But, with all his learning and cleverness, I would not take him for a safe commentator on sacred writ.

Let us now proceed to consider the most important part of the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, contained in the New Testament.

IX.

THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORD CONCERNING THE WITNESSES WHO SAW JESUS AFTER HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

WE will endeavour to take what seems to be the natural order of the record :—

1. The evangelists Matthew and Mark relate that, what seems to have been, a band of women approach the sepulchre early in the morning of the first day, our Sunday. In this band of women were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome——

"I must interrupt you again, sir," our sceptical friend would like to say: "John shews that Mary Magdalene was alone."

Indeed, he does not. You will see that, very clearly, if you read on a little.

"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" say the women among them-

selves, as they are drawing near the garden where it was hewn out of the rock. "It was very great," says St. Mark. In the Codex Bezæ, a very ancient manuscript preserved in the University of Cambridge, it is said that it took twenty men to roll the stone *to* the door of the sepulchre. This statement is not confirmed by any other ancient testimony; but it indicates that the early Christians believed the stone was, indeed, 'very great.'

Behold, the women, as they come near the tomb, see that the stone *is* rolled away! And Mary Magdalene, believing that the Saviour's body had been taken out of the sepulchre—but, without stopping to see—runs back, immediately, to Jerusalem, to tell Peter and John what she fears. She says to them—"They have taken away the Lord, and *we* know not where they have laid him." "*We* know not": you see John does not mean that Mary Magdalene went to the sepulchre alone: she had evidently left her companions there, and thus speaks of them, to Peter and John, as having the like fears with herself.

Meanwhile, the women who were left behind by Mary Magdalene, venture to enter the tomb, and

see "a young man sitting in a long white garment," says Mark, who writes down the substance of Peter's preaching—Peter, the 'matter-of-fact' man, who always describes things in a matter-of-fact way, or as they seem to be to the outward eye. Matthew says it was an angel—the angel who had rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. But the women do not see him there: they see him on entering into the sepulchre. He tells them not to be affrighted, but to come and see where the Lord lay—for, he is risen; and to go and tell the disciples—"and Peter," adds Mark—poor remorseful Peter whom his Lord pitied,—that they were to go into Galilee, and that there the Saviour would meet them.

"And," continues Mark, "they went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed; neither said they anything to any"—to any they met on their way to tell the disciples he means; for they went to tell the disciples—but the most thoughtful critics are of opinion that Jesus did *not* meet them until after they had seen and spoken to the disciples—for the words in our common version of Matthew's gospel, "And as

they went to tell his disciples," are not in the best manuscripts.

2. But, now, Peter and John reach the sepulchre, followed by Mary Magdalene. John outruns Peter, stoops down and sees the linen clothes lying—but Peter comes up, and goes into the sepulchre at once, with his accustomed impetuosity, and sees the linen clothes lie—of course, with the spices, though they are not mentioned—and the napkin which had been bound about the Saviour's head "not lying with the linen clothes, but neatly wrapped (or folded) up"—says the Greek—"in a place by itself." What he saw was so remarkable, that Peter undoubtedly told John. "Then went in that other disciple," says John himself, "and he saw and believed." Believed what?—Believed that his Lord was risen, doubtless. It would be a sweet glow of new-born faith—a faith so trembling that he would not be bold enough to reveal it, even to Peter, at first, or to the rest of the disciples when he met them.

As for Peter, one can easily imagine his perplexity. *He* had no thought of a resurrection; and so, his matter-of-fact mind must have eagerly scanned

the linen clothes and spices, and the face-napkin so neatly folded up, and lying in a place by itself, —over and over again;—and have striven to come to some conclusion, as to the meaning of what he saw, coupled with the fact that the Saviour's body was gone. We must remember that neither he, nor John, knew anything of the setting of the watch—for that would be done as secretly as possible. Nor would they know anything of the rolling away of the stone by the angel. The words of Mary Magdalene would possess Peter's mind: "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him."

"But who can have taken away a naked corpse?" Peter would think. "Our friends, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who brought the body into this new tomb, did it out of love and reverence. They wound it in these linen clothes, with these spices, and wound this napkin about my Lord's head; and they would never mar the acts of devout respect thus rendered to him, by rudely re-opening the sepulchre so soon, stripping his dead body, and carrying it away, naked, to bury

elsewhere. Neither can the body have been taken away by common thieves, employed by my Master's enemies; for they would have been in haste, and have carried away the body without staying to unwrap it. They would neither have left the clothes and spices behind them, nor have folded up the napkin thus neatly. What can be the meaning of it all!"—and Peter would leave the tomb with a sort of stupefied wonder.

3. When Peter and John "went away again to their own home," Mary Magdalene stood weeping, and remained at the sepulchre. She 'stood *without*': she had not gone into the sepulchre; and perhaps, from her absorption in grief, knew not what Peter and John had seen in it. But, when they are gone, she stoops down to look into the sepulchre, "and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." And they say unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She says "*I* know not," now she is alone: it was "*We* know not" when she was

describing her own fears and the fears of the other women, to Peter and John.

"And when she had thus said, she turned herself back"—very likely in fear at the appearance of the two speakers in white—and sees Jesus standing near her, but without knowing him. Her tears would blind her;—her grief, joined with the fear she would feel at the vision of angels, would render her incapable of distinct observation;—and yielding to the first natural thought that came into her mind, that the gardener was about his business thus early, she thus addressed Jesus as the gardener: "If thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away"—words that shew the distraction of her grief.

"Mary!" says the dear, familiar voice.

"Rabboni!"—my Master, cries Mary, and seems to have fallen to clasp his feet, in a moment.

You know the next words of Christ—"Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." What various interpretations have been given of these words! Paley thinks that Christ's reply is

founded on some former conversation, 'for the want of knowing which his meaning is hidden from us.' Several writers have hastily concluded that Christ forbad Mary Magdalene to touch—or to attempt to touch—his body, because it was a 'spiritual body,' and, therefore, really could not be touched:—forgetting that Jesus invited the disciples, afterwards, to handle him and learn that he had *not* a spiritual body. And some theorizers have gone into a mystical strain and taught that there was some mysterious necessity for Christ ascending to the Father, before he permitted his body to be touched.

Gilbert West's plain, common-sense way of understanding the meaning of Christ's words is, I humbly think, to be preferred before all other interpretations: Touch me not—don't stay to embrace my feet, now—don't take leave of me, now—I'm not going yet. I am not yet ascended to my Father: Christ does not mean that his body is not to be touched at all; but that there is no need of touching him—or staying to embrace his feet, *now;* Mary Magdalene had better hasten to the disciples, and tell them the

good news of his resurrection, and that he would ascend to heaven.

We cannot help pondering on the record that one angel is seen by the company of women, and two angels by Mary Magdalene, while Peter and John have no angelic vision. We ask ourselves "Why was this?"—but we cannot answer, fully. We know nothing about angels, except what the Bible tells us. We gather, there, that these 'messengers' of God can be either visible or invisible to human beings, so that they accomplish the purposes for which God sends them. Why an angel was appointed to make himself visible to the band of women, to light up the flame of their faith in the risen Saviour—while Peter and John were left to *think*, and to recal Christ's words—and two angels were visible to the weeping Magdalen, we cannot tell, completely. We must wait till we enter heaven, before we learn the complete answers to these and many other questions beside.

4. The evangelist Luke describes the visit to the sepulchre of a *second* company of women Gilbert West shews this clearly. He wrote a

book on the Resurrection of Christ, in 1749; and although that is one hundred and twenty-six years ago, I declare to you that I do not think a more sensible treatise has been written since—and I have read every treatise and sermon on Christ's resurrection that I could possibly get hold of. This second company of women see two angels, but not sitting at the head and feet where Jesus had lain, as Mary Magdalene saw them. The two angels evidently are not seen by this band of women, at first, when they enter the sepulchre, as Luke tells us, and find not the body of Jesus. But "it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men *stood* by them, in shining garments."

The women are afraid, and bow their faces to the earth; and then the angels are described as addressing them in words *not* addressed by the one angel to the first band of women: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but he is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise

again." And Luke says "they remembered his words": the words of the Saviour.

These women leave the sepulchre, and tell what they have seen and heard to the apostles; but Luke tells us "their words seemed to them as idle tales." Peter, however, runs to the sepulchre —evidently a second time—stoops down and sees "the linen clothes laid by themselves"—just as he had seen them before—and returns, still "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

5. The appearance of Jesus to the first band of women must be classed next in order, you will discern from what occurs afterwards. It did *not* occur "as they went to tell his disciples," it has already been shewn. Jesus says to them "All hail!"—or, as it should be translated "Rejoice ye!"—and then, we read, "they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him"—words which, again, throw us back on Christ's words to Magdalen. He could not, we repeat, have meant that Mary was not to touch him, or that his body was not to be touched at all—for he permitted the band of women to touch him.

6. Peter was granted a sight of his risen Saviour,

also in the course of the same day. "He was seen of Kephas," says Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, and a few words in Luke make us acquainted with the same fact. The Saviour, who "knew what was in man," discerned the real love for his Master that there was in the heart of Peter, notwithstanding his failures. And so Peter's tormenting wonder and uncertainty were ended; and, now, he knew for himself that Jesus was a risen Saviour.

7. Also in the afternoon of the same first day, Christ manifested himself to Cleopas and another disciple, at Emmaus. Luke's picture is brief, but very life-like. We seem to see Jesus come up to the two disciples in their journey, and say unto them, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" And then they tell him the cause of their grief, and of their broken hopes—but unveil the fact that certain women of their company had been early to the sepulchre, and found not their Master's body, but declared that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that Jesus was alive. The two disciples also say to Jesus—"Certain of them which

were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not." Evidently, the two disciples allude to the testimony of the second band of women.

The few words in which Luke describes the reasoning of Christ with these two disciples, and his exposition of "the things concerning him," contained "in all the Scriptures"—and how they invite him to tarry with them—and how they come to know him—and he vanishes from their sight—form another picture so real that we linger over it with intense interest. Oh how we should have liked to hear the Blessed One tell, with his own voice, "the things concerning him," as they were written "in all the Scriptures"! We do not wonder that the two disciples said "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us, by the way?"

"Their eyes were holden that they should not know him," St. Luke says. They were prevented from knowing him at first, purposely. Christ meant to teach them that all which had come to pass was in fulfilment of the Scriptures and of God's eternal purpose; but he could not have won their serious and absorbed attention if he had

revealed himself to them, at first: they would have been affrighted, as the ten disciples were, afterwards.

It must have seemed strange to them, when he accepted their invitation to 'abide' with them, that, instead of reclining at the board, to partake of their frugal evening meal, like a guest,—he took the place of the 'master of the feast,' who, after blessing the cup, always took the bread and broke it, and after eating a little of it himself, distributed it round the table. But when Christ came to the breaking of the bread the two disciples knew him at once. Doubtless, there was always a divine sweetness in the face of the Saviour, when he performed this devout act: a sweetness they never saw in any other face. I cannot help thinking that this is the real solution of the question—how they knew him so instantly.

And I will tell you of another thought I have: that the remembrance of the Saviour's divine sweetness of look as he broke bread with his disciples was handed down, by tradition, in the Christian Church; and that that is the reason why so many of the old painters chose this act of the Saviour as a subject for their pencil. Some of you, no doubt,

have seen an engraving of Carlo Dolci's painting; but if you ever go to old Stamford, be sure to trip over to Burleigh House and see the painting itself, in the Marquis of Exeter's gallery. If you have any soul for Art in you, you will long to gaze on it, perhaps, longer than you can stay; and will say it would be worth walking twenty miles to go and see it, again.

Christ vanished from their sight, when the two disciples knew him. We do not wonder that they immediately girt up their loins and returned to Jerusalem to tell the apostles.

8. Ten of the apostles, and others with them, were found, gathered together, by the two disciples from Emmaus. Judas had fallen, and Thomas was absent. Cleopas and his friend no sooner enter and tell the company how their Lord had appeared to them, than they are assured by the apostles themselves that Christ is risen, and that he has appeared to Peter. "The doors were shut, for fear of the Jews," St. John assures us; and both he and St. Luke tell us that Jesus suddenly stood in the midst of them, and said 'Peace be unto you!' It is the mode of greeting, the form of salutation,

which has prevailed, in the East, for unnumbered ages; and it prevails still. If you meet a Turk, or an Arab, in the streets of London, you cannot please him better than by saying to him—'*Salaam alikoom!*—Peace be unto you.' He will smile and bow, and placing his right hand on his heart, will reply '*Alikoom salaam!*—To you peace.'

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit," says Luke. And then the Saviour shews them his wounded hands and feet and side, and invites them to handle him, and see that it is himself—"for a spirit," he reminds them, "has not flesh and bones, as they see he has." And, now, their terror is gradually changed into joy; and "they are glad when they see the Lord"—when they come to the full perception that it is the very human Saviour they have known so well, and for whom they had grieved so much. Yet, their faith trembles—"they believed not for joy, and wondered"; and to convince them fully, Jesus says "Have ye here any meat?" And they give him a piece of broiled fish, "and he took, and did eat before them."

We will not stay, now, to discuss the questions

of the closed doors and the sudden appearance of Christ, and the nature of his body. Let us get through the full record, in the New Testament, concerning the witnesses who saw Jesus after he rose from the dead, before we enter again on such discussions.

The Saviour 'opens their understanding,' let us remember, as well as convinces them by eyesight that it is himself: that is to say, he shews them how all his suffering had been revealed in the Scriptures, as well as his resurrection; and that he makes all this clear to them, because they are 'witnesses of these things,' and they will have to testify of them and preach them. And as an earnest of their great commission "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost"!

9. "And after eight days"—that is to say, again on the first day of the week—John tells us in his 'supplementary' gospel, "again his disciples were within, and Thomas was with them. Then came Jesus, *the doors being shut*, and stood in the midst." And then follows the affecting scene between unbelieving Thomas and himself.

10. The record in the last chapter of St. John may be classed next. It is indeed a *supplementary* chapter, and to what has been often called his 'supplementary' gospel. For the aged and loving disciple had evidently intended to conclude his gospel with that portion of it which we call the twentieth chapter. But he remembers that "after these things Jesus shewed himself again to his disciples, at the sea of Tiberias," and so he gives us this account of Christ's appearance to Peter and Thomas, and Nathanael (or Bartholomew) and James and John, and 'two other disciples,' who had gone a-fishing, and had toiled all night and caught nothing. Jesus stands on the shore in the early morning, and directs them to cast their net on the right side of the ship; and soon it was so full that they had great difficulty in dragging the net to the shore. Then follows the conversation of Christ with the disciples, and his remarkable questioning of Peter.

The appearances of Christ had, hitherto, been in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood; but this appearance is by the old familiar lake, in Galilee. The disciples had come into Galilee, not with the

purpose of staying there, but to be ready for the especial meeting which their Lord had appointed and of which the women were forewarned by the angels on the morning of the resurrection.

11. The meeting, on a mountain, in Galilee, is described by Matthew, and it is generally held by Christian writers that it is the meeting of which St. Paul speaks in the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthian church: "After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once—of whom," says Paul, "the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

"And when they saw him, they worshipped him: *but some doubted*," says St. Matthew. There seems nothing surprising in such a statement, if this were really the meeting of "above five hundred brethren"—that is to say, of persons who had believed in the Messiahship of Christ, from seeing him heal the sick and lame and blind and from listening to his discourses. Human nature is the same in all ages; and among a crowd, we should expect to find some doubters.

Christ declares that all power is given to him in heaven and in earth, and again bids those who

hear him to go forth and preach his gospel to all nations. They who intended to obey him would, now, quit Galilee and return to Jerusalem—for *there* they knew they were to open their commission, according to his command.

12. A separate appearance to James, is mentioned by St. Paul, only. If it were to 'James, the Lord's brother'—or cousin, as others read it—Jesus might instruct him how he would have to remain at Jerusalem, and be, to his life's end, the pillar of the Christian church there. If it were to James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, Christ might give him the solemn forewarning that he must be the first among the apostles to suffer martyrdom, and that Herod would put him to death. We must wait till we get to heaven before we know to which James it was that Christ thus appeared, separately; and what our Lord really said to him.

13. The last appearance of Jesus to his disciples, which is briefly alluded to by St. Paul in the fifteenth chapter, First Corinthians, is described, more at length, by St. Luke, at the close of his gospel, and in the early part of the first chapter of

the Acts of the Apostles. Christ led them out of Jerusalem, across the Kedron and the valley of Jehosaphat, by the garden of Gethsemane, and up the slope of Olivet, "as far as to Bethany." Was it to the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus? Did he take a loving farewell of the family who had so often been blessed with his holy presence? His blessed lips would be discoursing sweetly, all the way as he went, "of the things that pertain to the kingdom of God."

"Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel?" ask the disciples. They are still dull and unspiritual. They still hanker after the temporal Messiahship. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But *ye* shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you." They know not what that means; but when he has lifted up his hands and blessed them, and he is 'parted from them,' and 'a cloud'—the Schekinah, one cannot help concluding—'received him from their sight'—"behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?

This same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."

The disciples would only see the two angels—for such were the 'two men in white apparel,'—for a few moments. The angels had delivered their message, and so would disappear, and leave the apostles to give up all thought of seeing Jesus again, till he should come in his glory. Did they expect him soon? They returned to Jerusalem, from the mount of Olives, and "with the women" from Galilee, "and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren," they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Then they cast lots, and a successor is appointed to Judas Iscariot the betrayer, in order to make up the number of the twelve. Did they still expect Jesus to return soon, in temporal power? They wait to "receive power," as Christ promised—and, at length the Holy Ghost comes upon them, and they speak with tongues, and their spirits are filled with boldness, and their hearts with joy, and thousands are added to the Church by their preaching. They feel that their Lord's promise is realised: they

have 'received power'—but it could hardly be in the way they expected.

14. "Last of all, he was seen of me also," says St. Paul, in the passage already quoted from the fifteenth chapter, First Corinthians. The relation of St. Paul's journey to Damascus is given three times over, in the Acts of the Apostles. The seeming discrepancies are easily explained. "Hearing a voice, but seeing no man," in the eighth chapter of the Acts, does not seem to mean more than is meant by the passage in the twenty-second chapter—"They heard not the voice of him that spake to me." The meaning to be gathered from both passages is that the men who were with Paul heard certain sounds, but knew not what the sounds were, or whether they were from the voice of a man, for they saw none.

Christ's appearance is not depictured, or described, in any of the three narratives in the Acts; but it is *affirmed* in each of the three passages, in the eighth, twenty-second, and twenty-sixth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, that Jesus did appear to Paul. In the first passage, Ananias says to Paul, "Brother Saul, the Lord—even Jesus that

appeared unto thee in the way, as thou camest." In the second passage, Ananias is also described as saying to Paul—"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth." And in the third passage, Jesus himself is described by Paul, as saying "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness," etc.

I repeat that the appearance of our Lord to Paul is not depictured or described; but it is clearly affirmed. And Paul did not regard it as mere 'subjective vision,'—as trance or ecstasy. He regards it as "the direct perception of the visible presence of Jesus Christ"—to quote the language of Dean Howson

X.

CONSIDERATION OF THEORIES RESPECTING THE RESURRECTION-BODY OF CHRIST.

SUCH is the evidence for the Resurrection of Christ derived from the testimony of those who saw him after he rose again from the dead.

"And I, sir," says one of my sceptical hearers, "have listened to your summing-up of what you call the vital part of the evidence for Christ's resurrection, with as much patience as I could command. But you must know that a great part of this evidence, as you call it, is utterly incredible. What are we to think of a real human person, who could be handled and felt, and who could eat and drink, standing suddenly in the midst of a company who were sitting in a room with closed doors?"

I will state your objections, my friend, as fully and forcibly as Strauss states them; I will also give this audience the conclusion to which Strauss comes; and then give you what I believe to be

the only solution to Strauss's difficulties, and to your own.

Of this kind are the reasonings of Strauss:—If Jesus were really 'handled' by the disciples,—if Thomas really did put his finger into the print of the nails in Christ's hands, and his hand into the wound in Christ's side,—if Jesus really did eat of the broiled fish—we are presented with a real human body—a body like our own: there can be no misconception about that. But *our* bodies cannot penetrate through closed doors and walls, and make themselves suddenly visible and invisible. Yet it is affirmed that the body of Jesus Christ did all this! Then, as the accounts in the Gospels are so contrary to human experience,—so utterly irreconcileable with reason,—I reject the accounts altogether. I have no doubt that Peter, and John, and James, and the rest, may have imagined that they saw Christ. I have no doubt that they believed it. I do not suspect them, for a moment, of dishonesty. But I do not believe that they saw Jesus stand in their midst, and talk, and eat—although he had entered the room while the doors were closed. I do not believe this; and I insist

that no reasonable man can believe it. The whole story must be swept out of the domain of History: henceforth it must be held to belong to the domain of Romance: the region of the Imagination.

And thus Strauss thought he had for ever annihilated all possible belief in the Resurrection of Christ, among reasonable and cultured men. And why was it that Strauss, with all his subtle and powerful logic, and with all his undoubted sincerity and honesty, came to such a conclusion? Because he set out with the assumption that Jesus was a mere man,—that Jesus was *not* Divine as well as human,—that his nature was simply human nature, and therefore nothing could be done in it and by it, but what could be done with our common human natures. If Jesus had been a mere man, the argument of Strauss is so perfectly and conclusively true that it is unassailable. But since Christ was God and Man the argument of Strauss is worth nothing.

"And is that the sole solution you have to offer me, for my difficulties?" our sceptical friend will ask.

It is. I have no other solution to offer you. I

despise all *ingenious* attempts to solve these difficulties by trying to shew—as some half-hearted critics have done—that Christ *might* have entered by the door, without being observed by the disciples, while they were hotly and excitedly absorbed in conversation. I tell you, plainly, that there is no solution of your difficulty—no answer to the argument of Strauss—but a full acknowledgement of the Divinity of Christ. It was because He was God as well as Man, that he *could* rise from the dead: that He could restore His human body to life. "He rose," says quaint old Dr. Donne, "as none before did, none ever after shall rise. He rose: others are but raised. 'Destroy this temple,' says he, 'and I will raise it.' I—without employing any other architect." Did He not say 'I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down on myself—I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"?

It was because He was God as well as Man, that He could walk on the waves, and pass in and out of rooms, without the unclosing of fastened doors. As God, He was the Maker and Sustainer of

Nature, and had perfect power over every part of it—so that He could dissolve that human body, and re-unite it, in a moment, if He willed so to do. And who shall say that He did not?

"But is this the only answer we should receive from others?" our sceptical friend may say to me. "You say, this is the only solution *you* can give to our difficulty. But are there not teachers from whom we should receive a different solution?"

I cannot conceal from you the fact that you would receive a different solution from many Christian teachers. Some would assure you, at once and without any circumlocution, that the resurrection-body of Christ was what St. Paul would have called a 'spiritual body,' and, therefore, not limited by the conditions of matter. Others would boldly tell you that the manifestations of Christ to his disciples, after he rose again from the dead, were only 'subjective'; and depended on the power he gave them to see him, supernaturally. But, I will not waste your time by dwelling on theories which are not held, or taught, by teachers who are termed 'Evangelical.' I think it better to point you to one theory which

is supported by eminent names. It may be deemed venturous and needless for me to declare myself a dissident from this theory ; but as I claim the right to think for myself, I shall not hesitate to do it.

More than a dozen years ago, the distinguished Presbyterian divine, Dr. Candlish, of Edinburgh, excited great attention by a series of discourses from the pulpit, which he afterwards collected into a volume, under the title of 'Life in a Risen Saviour." With the keen argumentative subtlety which characterised his mind, Dr. Candlish strove, in these discourses, to construct a mystical theory on the words 'flesh and bones' used by the risen Saviour, when he appeared to his disciples, so suddenly, in the room wherein they were sitting with closed doors. To every ordinary reader, the terms used by Jesus seem to be purposely employed, in order to produce in the minds of the wonder-stricken and doubting disciples the conviction that he has a real body—a substantial, material frame—a something that can be seen and felt. He means that they are *not* to frighten themselves with the thought that he is only a spirit—an

incorporeal existence. They are to 'handle' him, and be fully convinced that he has a real body—a body of matter—of 'flesh and bones.'

And, when Christ, perceiving that the faith of the disciples still hangs in the balance—that their convictions still halt and linger—says to them 'Children, have you any meat?'—and when he partakes of the food they give to him—the broiled fish — (for "honeycomb" is not in the most ancient copies)—ordinary readers conclude that Jesus did this *not* as a mere *make-believe*, in which there was no reality; but that he did actually and truly eat, in the presence of his disciples, as he had been wont to do, that they might be perfectly convinced he was still possessed of a veritable human body: a material body, as before.

But, Dr. Candlish has very different views. He sets the terms 'flesh and blood' and 'flesh and bones' in opposition to each other. And he marshals scripture texts, with singular dexterity, to shew that the former terms 'flesh and blood' are a Gentile expression of human relationship—while the latter, 'the Jewish mode of expressing kinsmanship, by unity of flesh and bones, rather than

of blood, bears the trace or mark of a higher conception than our Gentile phraseology embodies.' A higher conception, he says, of a 'humanity' which 'is to be perfect, incorruptible, and immortal.'

You will ask me, how the doctor makes his meaning clear as to *what kind of a body* the Saviour wished his disciples to understand that he had, when he said "handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." I will give you the doctor's own words; and if his meaning be clear to you, I shall have to confess that your mental eye-sight is stronger than mine.

"There is, therefore, no real inconsistency," says Dr. Candlish, "between the apostle saying 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' and the risen Lord saying 'I have flesh and bones.' The two expressions are quite distinct. The first, 'flesh and blood,' denotes the human bodily nature, liable to dissolution and decay. The other, 'flesh and bones,' points rather to its higher spiritual development in a structure having extension and form—bones and flesh of some sort,—but not necessarily of a sort resolvable into dust and perishable."

"Bones and flesh *of some sort*"! How could a man so intelligent as Dr. Candlish allow himself to talk so loosely? "But *not* necessarily of a sort resolvable into dust and perishable"! Whoever heard of *such sort* of bones, before? What man of science has ever discovered bones *not* resolvable into dust and perishable? '*Of some sort*': of *what* sort? No man knows of flesh, bones, or blood, which are 'incorruptible and immortal.' When St. Paul said 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' he doubtless meant 'bones' as well. I cannot forbear saying that to my mind, this laboured theory of Dr. Candlish is, simply, a mere meteor of his fancy—an imagination which dazzled him, till he set himself to build, out of it, an hypothesis which should attract others by its novelty.

The great purpose of broaching this theory on the part of this eminent and excellent divine, was to lead his Christian audience and his readers to feel a triumphant confidence that *they* shall have 'perfect, incorruptible, and immortal' bodies, because *their* bodies, at the general resurrection, are to resemble the Saviour's. But, in the

earlier part of the very discourse that I have just quoted, the doctor shews that he intends his hypothesis to stand also as an explication of the fact that the risen Saviour could appear and disappear, suddenly, in spite of closed doors; and could pass—the apostles knew not whither and re-appear, they knew not from whence.

The great Scottish divine having thus given the start, has been followed by other teachers in the path of mysticism. More lately, Dr. Westcott, Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge,—a divine to whom every Christian man must feel deeply obliged by his valuable contributions to our stores of Christian Evidence—has published his 'Gospel of the Resurrection.' This learned and critical divine uses the term 'glorified body' to describe the resurrection-body of Christ: a term *not* used by Dr. Candlish—and yet Dr. Westcott has evidently espoused the Scottish divine's theory about the 'flesh and bones.' This is manifest from the language of a note on one of his pages:—

"The significant variation from the common formula 'flesh and blood' must have been at

once intelligible to Jews, accustomed to the provisions of the Mosaic ritual, and nothing would have impressed upon them more forcibly the transfiguration of Christ's body than the verbal omission of the element of blood which was for them the symbol and seal of corruptible life."

Professor Westcott also says, on the same page, "This Body which was recognised as essentially the same Body, had undergone some marvellous change, of which we can gain a faint idea by what is directly recorded of its manifestations. Thus we find that the Person of Christ was not recognised directly by those who saw Him. However firm their conviction was afterwards that they 'had seen the Lord,' they knew Him first when He was pleased to make Himself known. Human sense alone was not capable of discerning Who He was. It could not be otherwise if His Body was glorified, for our senses can only apprehend that which is of kindred nature with themselves."

But, if this be true:—if "human sense was not capable of discerning Who He was,"—if "our senses can only apprehend that which is

of kindred nature with themselves,"—why did Christ mock the disciples by telling them to 'handle' him, 'and see' that he was *not* a spirit, but had 'flesh and bones'—that is to say, that his body was like other human bodies? I repeat, that I cannot for a moment suppose that there was anything like *make-believe* in the Saviour's invitation to the disciples. He must have meant that *their* human senses *could* "appre hend that which" was "of kindred nature with themselves."

"And, as Christ's body," continues Dr. Westcott, "was no longer necessarily to be recognised, so also it was not bound by the material laws to which its action was generally conformed. He is found present, no one knows from whence. He passes away, no one knows whither. He stands in the midst of the little group of the Apostles 'when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews.' He 'vanished out of the sight' of those whose eyes were opened that they knew Him. And, at last, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud 'received Him out of their sight.' It is impossible not to feel in reading the narratives that we are

regarding a form of existence human, indeed, yet indefinitely ennobled by the removal of needs and limitations to which we are at present subject. It is vain for us to speculate on the nature of that transformed human Body. We can form no clear positive conception which is not shaped by the present laws of thought. Negatively, we can only say, that it was not bound by those laws of space (for example) which necessarily enter into all that we think or do."

Such are the speculations of our modern divines: Christ's resurrection-body was a "transformed human body": it was "a form of existence human," but it had none of the "needs and limitations" to which our ordinary human bodies are subject. Dr. Westcott thinks "it is vain for us to speculate on the nature of that transformed human body"—although he *does* speculate on its nature, and assures himself that "it was not bound by the material laws," and that thus it was that it enabled Christ to stand in the midst of the disciples when the doors were closed, and to appear and disappear in a moment.

The chief purpose of Professor Westcott in em-

ploying this theory is of the same excellent and highly spiritual character, as the purpose of Dr. Candlish; and no Christian can read the 'Life in a Risen Saviour' and 'The Gospel of the Resurrection' without feeling the most profound respect for the authors of these books. But I am compelled to confess that I cannot see the worth or the verity of this Incorruptible and Immortal Flesh-and-Bone Theory. Neither flesh nor bone, any more than blood can be incorruptible and immortal: nor can bone inherit the kingdom of God, any more than flesh and blood. I must plainly avow my honest conviction that all attempts to account for Christ's manner of visiting His disciples after His resurrection, by inventing mystical theories about the change in His body, are utterly needless. If the devisers of these theories were asked *how* Christ could walk on the waves 'in the days of his flesh'—they would, doubtless, reply that it was because He was God as well as Man, and He Who *sustains* the 'law of gravitation' can *suspend* it. Then, why spin this mystical theory to account for Christ's standing in the midst of His disciples in a room while the doors were closed? If God makes all

the "laws of Nature"—as philosophers call them—can He not suspend or transcend any of them if He chooses so to do?

It is very observable, at how great a distance from all enticing speculations our old English Church divines preserve themselves, when dealing with the brief Gospel records of Christ's appearance to his disciples after his resurrection. The great exhaustive intellect of Isaac Barrow—the acute and thoroughly logical mind of Samuel Clarke—the shrewd perceptive power and brilliance of South—the plain, English sense of Tillotson—(I might name many more)—were employed, at Easter seasons, in deducing useful and inspiring lessons for their hearers, from the grand theme of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. But they never suffer themselves to be led into visionary or mystical theories about Christ's resurrection-body. Their plain belief is very plainly expressed: that the risen Saviour passed away from and entered into, the company of his disciples, by the same miraculous power that he walked on the waves: He was God and Man.

Dear old Matthew Henry displays a little ink-

ling towards speculation, in his commentary on the twentieth chapter of St. John's Gospel. "When they (the disciples) were assembled," says he, "Jesus came among them, in his own likeness, yet drawing a veil over the brightness of his body, now begun to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes, as in the transfiguration." A notion, one cannot help thinking, that he caught from Origen, who thought that Christ's divinity shone so brightly through his body after the resurrection, that the disciples could only bear to look on it, now and then. Origen thinks this was why Christ did not *abide* with His disciples, during the forty days which elapsed between His resurrection and ascension. Origen's conception must be ascribed to his Platonism: the Platonists of his time held that human spirits separated from the body, pass into 'luciform vehicles,' or bodies of light.

Jeremy Taylor, for a wonder, is, at first, vehemently naturalistic. "When the third day was come"—I quote from his "Life of Christ"—"the soul of Jesus returned from Paradise and the visitation of separate spirits, and re-entered into his holy body, which he, by his Divine power, did

redintegrate, *filling his veins with blood*, healing all his wounds, excepting those five of his hands, feet and side, which he reserved as trophies of his victory, and arguments of his passion."

But soon, his 'seraphic fancy' peeps out. "And though," says he, "like Moses, descending from the mount, he wore a veil, that the greatness of his splendour might not render him unapt for conversation with his servants; yet the holy scripture affirms that he was now no more to see corruption."

A few more words on this theme, and we leave it. A sceptical friend asks me to state plainly, since we read that Christ left the grave clothes in the sepulchre, how he was clad! And I call to mind a curious discussion I had with London sceptics, in the Hall of Science, City-Road, one Sunday night, in 1857,—on this very subject. One stout debater insisted that the Gospel account was positively indecorous, for it left us to draw but one possible conclusion: that Jesus was utterly without clothing when he appeared in the early morning, in the garden, to Mary Magdalen.

"O nay!" instantly replied a real Cockney; "it

wasn't so. You know, she took him for the gardener. Doubtless, it was because, *being in buff*, he had put on the gardener's clothes, having found 'em in the garden-house!"

There was a loud laugh; but the Cockney looked amazed to witness it. I verily believe, the poor fellow believed what he said.

Professor Westcott touches this question very shyly, in a note: "His dress (it has been said) must have been purely *subjective*. But a little reflection will shew that the special outward forms, in which the Lord was pleased to make Himself sensibly recognizable by His disciples, were no more necessarily connected with His glorified Person than the robes which He wore."

Here again is the language of mysticism,—a language in which I cannot convey my own simple belief. Neither could I tell you that I believe the Saviour's dress was "purely *subjective*"—for I believe no such nonsense. I tell you, without fine-spun philosophical phrases, and without fearing the ridicule of critics or unbelievers, that I believe Christ appeared to Magdalen and to His apostles in a perfectly decorous dress of His

own creation. And I think it most likely that it resembled the dress—the coat 'without seam, woven from the top to the bottom'—in which the disciples had been accustomed to see him, daily, in the days when they journeyed with him and took him in their boats upon the sea of Galilee.

I say—a dress of his own creation. He had but to will that it should exist, and it would exist. He created bread, twice, to feed the bodies of others: why should he not create clothing for his own body?

In conclusion, I will take the liberty to use the words of Dr. Candlish in expressing my own convictions: "Some have felt themselves shut up to the conclusion, that our Lord's body did not undergo the needful change from corruption to incorruption,—that it did not become a spiritual body,—until his ascension. Until then, in their view, His risen body was of the same kind with his body as it hung on the cross, and as it was laid in the grave. It was on its going into heaven, that it was so transformed from a natural to a spiritual body, as to be fitted for its heavenly immortality."

The doctor mentions Dr. John Brown, as holding

these views. I have never seen the book of Dr. John Brown; but have been accustomed, all my life, to hear these views expressed, by Christian teachers of various denominations. As a Christian believer I have never had any other views; and I can see no reason for changing them. I hold that the 'natural body' of the Saviour became a 'spiritual body' as He ascended to heaven—and *not before*.

XI.

THE DUTY OF ENQUIRY INTO THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES: AN EARNEST APPEAL TO SCEPTICAL WORKINGMEN.

I DO not imagine, or expect, that I can win over, at once, to Christianity, the minds of sceptical workingmen, who may be listening to me. I know too well, by personal experience, how hard it is to part with sceptical convictions—how difficult it is to bring a mind, which has become strongly warped in the direction of unbelief, to enter upon a determined, steady, and persevering consideration of the Christian Evidences. And without this—without an earnest and devoted study of Christian Evidence—no thinking sceptic (for I am not addressing vulgar scoffers) can ever become a real Christian.

I seek no flighty converts from your ranks—no sudden passing over to our side from yours, of

some hot, excitable partisan, who is incapable of thinking. I seek to lead you to accept what I believe to be Truth, by inducing you to practise the daily reflection, the steady conning over and over again of each item of the Christian Evidences, which effectually cured my doubts, and rendered me a settled and grateful believer. I would not lift up my finger, or stir a straw, to make a sudden and spasmodic conversion of any one of you, which would leave you helpless in your new belief, and incapable of giving a reason of the hope within you. Such a convert would be a very useless one. I want to enlist real soldiers for my Master.

Do not refuse to part with your prejudices. Do not say, lightly and scornfully, 'We can never believe such a story as that of Christ's resurrection.' I ask you, in the words of St. Paul, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?' If you believe in God's existence, Christ's resurrection ought not to be incredible to you. The Almighty Being Who gives and supports all life, can surely restore life. And, to those among you who do *not* believe in God's existence, I put the old question—How can you

account for the present existence of Christianity in the world, without granting it to be true—and without admitting that the Resurrection of Christ is a veritable fact?

I, again, urge upon you all, the necessity of reconsidering your doubts, and re-examining your sceptical convictions, instead of turning away to sink again into stolid indifference—or, to talk over your old prejudices, and strengthen one another in them, as you are wont to do.

1. Whether the story of the Resurrection be false or true, you cannot, as I have already said, peruse a story of equal—much less, of greater importance. No history, no narrative, ever written in the world has been creative of such unparalleled effects, as the history contained in the Four Gospels. Can it be possible that so many millions of our race—of the most enlightened part of our race—and, among them, hundreds of the brightest human intellects—have received this Gospel history for truth,—and yet it is but a bundle of fables, a mere tissue of superstition and mistake?

You cannot read these Gospels, attentively and thoughtfully, without feeling their pictorial power —

their *likeness to truth*. Unless you are under the influence of confirmed and rooted prejudice, you cannot say that the simple writing reads like a lie. There is a naturalness in the Gospel narratives which ever characterises truthful statement. Their writers never deal in rant, in turgid descriptions, in exaggerated portraitures.

The character and conduct of the witnesses who saw Jesus after he rose from the dead deserve your respect, and not your scorn. They were not men of weak character, however rude and uneducated they might be. They were not easily gullible men. When they received the report of the women who declared that they had seen Jesus and he had spoken to them, the apostles were stoutly incredulous. The report of the women seemed to them 'like idle tales.' And Thomas received the assurance of his fellow-disciples, that they had seen Jesus, with the sternest unbelief. There is not a sentence in the Gospels which would lead us to the conclusion that the apostles were men who could easily be imposed upon. They are as full of Jewish prejudices as the rest of their countrymen; and hold to their

prejudices with the same tenacity of character. They only yield up their prejudices—they only part with their unbelief—from the superincumbent pressure—the overwhelming force of evidence.

When they were assembled with closed doors and Jesus stood suddenly in their midst, their behaviour was perfectly natural behaviour. They were terrified, for they thought he was a spirit. And what wonder, since he appeared in a moment, and the doors had not been opened? We cannot wonder at their unbelief in the outset; but we should have wondered if it had continued. When Christ told them to 'handle' him, and thus make themselves sure that he had a natural body,—a body of 'flesh and bones,'—and when they saw him eat, it would have been strange indeed if their doubts did not begin to lessen, and their faith to dawn.

And, if their doubts again returned, and they feared they were mistaken,—yet, when Christ appeared to them, again and again, during the forty days before his ascension;—when they had had time to recall to mind, and talk with one another about, all the miraculous deeds of the

Saviour;—how they had seen him walk on the waves;—how they had received the broken loaves and divided fishes, from his hands, and had twice seen thousands of human beings fed, miraculously;—how they had seen him cure the leper, the paralytic, the lame, the blind, with a word;—how they had heard him summon Lazarus from the tomb, and seen the man who had been four days buried come forth alive, and had afterwards sat at meat with him;—they could not doubt any longer that the resurrection of their Lord and Master was real.

How Christ could pass into a room without the doors being unclosed;—*how* he could suddenly vanish from their sight;—*where* he was when he was absent from them;—they knew not: they could not have answered Strauss, if he had lived in their day, and put such questions to them. But, after all that they had witnessed so plainly, they could not doubt.

2. I entreat you, now, to fix your attention on the change wrought in the character and conduct of the Apostles, from the time of the resurrection of their Lord:—for the change wrought in them is one of the strongest and clearest proofs of the

truth of Christianity. Remember, how selfish and worldly were their expectations in the former time; and how Christ had to settle their foolish quarrels about earthly precedency. Remember their real ignorance as to who the Saviour really was. They knew nothing of His Divine Nature :—for we must not take those sudden words of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," as significative of the opinions of the Apostles. Peter seems, from what Christ says, to have uttered the words by Divine impulse, and without knowing the full meaning of them: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona!" says the Saviour, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee; but my Father which is in heaven."

They could not have known that Christ was God, as well as Man, and have walked and talked with Him, daily, as they did. Their whole natures must have shrunk into the dust—they could not have companied with Him as they did—had they known that He was God, as well as Man. They, doubtless, experienced feelings of awe and wonder, and questionings uninterpretable by their own minds, when they saw His miracles. But their language

was "What manner of *man* is this?" when He stilled the waves and the winds: they had, still, no conception that He was God. Even when they saw Him walk on the waves, it raised in them no belief in His Divinity, although they were affrighted till He spoke to them, and said "Be of good cheer, it is I!" Peter calls out "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee"—with the same loving and simple familiarity, as if he had been making the commonest request.

The 'infallible proofs' not only of his identity, as the very Jesus whom they had known; but, of His Divinity, must have begun to dawn upon their minds, during the 'forty days' that intervened between His resurrection and ascension. Although they were 'unlearned and ignorant men' in the opinion of the Sanhedrim, they knew that no merely human being could suddenly appear in a room with closed doors, and disappear in a moment. They knew that when He appeared in their midst, the second time, and reminded Thomas of his words of unbelief—He must have heard the words of Thomas when they did not know that He was near them and listening to them.

In the thrilling words of Bishop Wilberforce, "They saw Him; they heard Him; He joined unexpectedly in their conversation or actions, as if He had all along been, unseen, a witness of them; they handled Him; He was there; He blessed them; and again He vanished out of their sight. But was He gone, or only hidden? Was He away, or only unseen? They were now learning *He was ever with them;* that He was not, as before, present with those who were in one place, and therefore absent from those who were in another: that it was not with Him now as it had been of old, when He was not with the dying Lazarus at Bethany, because He was with the twelve in the parts of Galilee; but that wheresoever two or three were gathered, there He was in the midst of them; that space, and singleness of place, were not to Him.

"And this was a most practical belief. It gave a sense of reality to their whole lives. They were learning the great law of His spiritual presence. For all they did was done in His sight. In a moment He might stand visibly beside them. There was no more room for 'reasoning apart, in

the way, which of them was the greatest'; for they ever felt that His eye was on them; that His ear marked their words. And this, while it interfered with none of the true joys of life, did yet add a depth and a seriousness to its whole character; their actions were deeds done in full light, under the King's eye, with His approbation or displeasure marked on each; they were conscious of too high a presence to be triflers, or mean or shallow, themselves."

They became new men. It was by a gradual, yet really rapid process. What a contrast between the picture given of them, before, in half-a-dozen words, "They all forsook him and fled"—and their behaviour when he has ascended, and they have received the 'power from on high' that He had promised them! What a contrast between the cowardly Peter who trembles at the words of a servant maid, and denies His Master—and the unlettered fisherman, his tongue 'touched with hallowed fire,' uttering words, at Pentecost, which pierce his hearers to the heart, and proclaiming in triumphant syllables the resurrection of his Lord!

See how strong the conviction has become in

the hearts of the Apostles that their Master is Divine—when they take the lame man by the hand, and command him 'in the name of Jesus of Nazareth' to 'rise up and walk!' Listen to Peter making another great speech—preaching another great sermon—to the wondering crowd! How this fact about 'the Prince (or *Author*) of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead,' still burns upon his tongue! What an orator he becomes in a little time!—and, I don't think anybody would be so much surprised at it as Peter himself. "How is this?" Peter would say to himself, "that I, the poor, uneducated fisherman can talk in this way, and the people are converted so fast? (For the church *now* numbered five thousand!) Lord, it is Thy Holy Spirit that does the work, it is not poor blundering Peter!"

But, now come the priests, and the Sadducees, and the captain of the temple, and seize Peter and John, and put them in prison, till the next day. And, on the next morning, they are brought up before their judges, and the lame man who was healed likewise. "By what power, or what name, have ye done this?" the judges demand. You

see, they do not question the miracle itself: they believe it has been done by magic—by the aid of Evil Spirits—or by practising magical rites and pronouncing the word 'Tetragrammaton,' or some other awful collection of syllables. But Peter boldly tells them that the miracle has been done by faith in the name of Jesus whom they—the priests and rulers—had crucified; and whom *God has raised from the dead.*

And then the rulers are confounded, and put the prisoners out of Court, that they may talk it over a while. But, all they can summon courage to do is, to call them in again, and strictly forbid them to teach any more in the name of Jesus—and let them go!

Soon after the Sanhedrim bring them up again, and send them to prison again. But the angel of God releases them, and they go and teach in the temple. *Again* they are fetched, and brought up *again* for trial. It would seem that it was not only Peter and John, but the whole company of the apostles, this time—yet Peter is, still, the great spokesman, and witnesses again, boldly, that God hath exalted the Jesus whom they crucified to be 'a Prince and a Saviour.'

The rulers are 'cut to the heart,' and take counsel to slay the apostles. But the counsel of Gamaliel, and their own fears, prevail. And so they call in the offenders, and having beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus,—and, again,—they let them go! Such was the lame conclusion to all their display of authority on the part of the rulers! But, as for the apostles,—"They went forth rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame in His Name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Ancient tradition teaches that every one of the Apostles, except John, became martyrs for Christ. It is true, modern criticism rejects this tradition—as it rejects almost every other tradition. Yet no modern critic can prove the tradition false. And, so far as we can trace the lives of the apostles, by aid of the historic narratives and letters in the New Testament, we should hardly be led to the conclusion that many of them died a natural death. Paul does not seem to be describing his own experience, only, when he tells the Corinthians—"I think that

God hath set forth us, the apostles, last, as it were *appointed to death*. . . . We both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things, unto this day."

Paul was the apostle 'born out of due time,' to whom Christ appeared, miraculously, a long time, comparatively, after the ascension. If Paul's zeal was so great as we know it was (for neither English nor foreign sceptics doubt it) how great zeal must the companions of Christ have felt? To them He appeared not once only, but often; not in a dazzling environment of light, over-head, for a few moments, amid the hurry of a journey—but standing amidst them, as they sat together, and shewing them his hands and feet and side, and eating with them. Paul never tells us that he saw any of Christ's miracles; and it is not likely that he would omit to tell us, if he really witnessed any of them. He did not, like the other apostles, hear Christ say 'I will: be thou clean' and see the leper im-

mediately made whole. He did not, like the other apostles, hear the open declaration of the man who had been born blind, and to whom Jesus had given sight—'One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.' He did not, like the other apostles, see Jesus walk on the waves. He did not, like the other apostles, receive the broken bread and divided fishes from Christ's hands, and help to distribute them to the thousands who were miraculously fed.

Think of the forces, and repetition of forces, brought to bear on the convictions of the apostolic companions of Christ, compared with the evidence which swayed the mind of Paul. We cannot wonder that the resolution of the men to whom revelation after revelation was made by Christ, before and after his resurrection, impelled them to encounter all peril, all suffering, and death itself, in their testimony to the Risen Saviour. Their moral heroism cannot surprise us. Their nature would not have been like our common human nature, if they had acted otherwise with such compelling evidence surrounding them. Their conduct is consistent: the change in them is natural. All that is clear.

But, if they saw no Risen Christ—if they felt none of these compelling motives, they could not have been sane men to have led the lives they led. Impostors they could not have been. They had no motives for imposture, for they had nothing to gain by it. And sane men could not have held by the day-dreams which Strauss imputes to them, amid the scorn and suffering of years, to end their lives by martyrdom.

"It is impossible," says Dr. Macpherson of Aberdeen, in his excellent Lectures on the Resurrection, "for any sane mind to have been deluded by its own imagination, however excited, as Strauss represents these followers of Jesus to have been. Strauss, or any other person, may easily assert that such was the case; but, we repeat, the supposition, taking all the circumstances into consideration, is morally impossible. Imagination cannot so operate in any mind not deprived of reason. A sound mind may be deceived by outward appearances, or by plausible testimony. Nay, it may, at times, be deluded by suggestions of its own imagination. But such a mind will recover its proper condition as soon as time and events have withdrawn the

sources of deception or of delusion. Insanity alone could account for such a delusion as that under which, according to Strauss, these first disciples laboured."

Then, were the apostles insane? What were those words of Paul?—"Being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat." Did you ever know any madness like that, my sceptical friends? I wish the whole world were converted to such madness: the madness of men forgiving their enemies, and blessing those who revile them! What a happy world it would soon be, if it were smitten with such madness!

XII

CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE: OUR OWN EXISTENCE IN THE ETERNAL FUTURE MADE CERTAIN BY THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

"WE see, clearly enough, what you mean," some of you will say, "by urging us to consider, so especially, the evidence for Christ's resurrection. You mean, that His resurrection, some way or other, secures our resurrection; and that we might become assured of that, by studying this evidence. But you know our greatest difficulty:—What solution of it do you offer to us?—

"When we die, our bodies will, in the lapse of years, be dispersed throughout Nature, and become, very likely, over and over again, parts of other bodies. How can we live again, when our bodies are scattered into atoms, and are driven miles asunder?"

How is it that you live *now*, at this present moment—and the body you had ten years ago is scattered into atoms, and the atoms may be driven miles asunder? With your materialistic notions, you would have contended that the brain you had, ten years ago, thought, reasoned, and remembered; and that, whatever knowledge you had treasured up, was treasured up in that brain. But that brain is gone—scattered into atoms, which may be driven miles asunder: where is the knowledge you had ten years ago—the remembrance of incidents in childhood—of the sayings and doings of your friends in youth—reminiscences of your reading, your fancies, your day-dreams—records more serious of your manhood—pictures of scenery—remembrances of facts—of grateful joys and of heavy sorrows—of mirth and of heart-ache—where are all these, *now?*—scattered into atoms of forgetfulness, with the atoms of the brain you had ten years ago?

No: because it was *not* your brain which knew, and recorded, and remembered. It was your Mind: your real Self. And when the body and brain you have now are scattered into atoms, and

driven miles asunder, your real Self will still exist—will still live.

There is no greater rationality in concluding that your body is your real Self, any more than that the air around you, or the earth on which you tread, is your real Self. Your brain is composed of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, phosphorus, and so on. But how can you imagine, or believe, that so many parts of these, by being mingled, interfused, or combined, can attain the faculty, or power, of thinking? Why permit yourself to be mystified by people who call themselves philosophers, and who, like Dr. Tyndall, *prophesy because they cannot prove*, that some day, or other, men will come to learn that Matter thinks? Use your common-sense, workingmen, is the humble advice I give you; and tell such people that you are not to be humgudgeoned by such prophecies; and that a philosopher's part is *not* to prophesy, but to prove, by induction.

I wish you workingmen would learn to read Bishop Butler. You could scarcely do that, without preferring him to all other reasoners. He shows that we cannot reason that death is the

destruction of Ourselves—for we do not know what death really is. We only witness some of its effects, such as the dissolution of flesh, skin, and bones. We are also ignorant as to what the exercise of our living powers depends upon. They seem to be extinct when we are fast asleep, or in a swoon. But they are not extinct: we soon exercise them again. This shews that our living powers may be suspended without being destroyed.

We know by our own consciousness that we are Ourselves. I want you to look at this very closely. You know that the air around you is *not* Yourself, nor any part of yourself. Then, if you breathe it, and it becomes a part of your bodily system, it is still no part of your real Self. You see an ox, or a sheep, in a field. You are sure that neither animal is a part of Yourself. And, if either animal be killed, and you eat of its flesh, and so its body becomes a part of your bodily system, still it is no part of your real Self, any more than it was while the animal walked in the field.

Your real Self thinks, judges, remembers, and its power of thinking, judging, remembering, may be suspended, only to be again exercised—but your

thumb does not think, your great toe does not judge, your little finger does not remember; and so neither can your brain do any of these—for the chemical substances of which it is composed are found in other parts of your bodies, and these can neither think, judge, or remember, separately—and how should they do so, together?

"It is as easy to conceive," argues again Butler—the prince of reasoners—that our real Selves "may exist out of our bodies as in them: and that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and senses wholly different from these now given us; that we may hereafter animate these same or new bodies variously modified and organized; as to conceive we can animate bodies such as our present. And, lastly, the dissolution of all these several organized bodies, supposing ourselves to have successfully animated them, would have no more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings—Ourselves,—or deprive us of living faculties,—the faculties of perception and of action,—than the dissolution of any foreign matter, which we are capable of receiving impressions from, and making use of for the common occasions of life."

I am thinking of another objection to Man's spiritual nature which I have often heard from doubters: that the growth of our intellectual powers accompanies the growth towards maturity of our bodies; and that our intellectual power declines as our bodily strength declines. But let no one ever persuade you that they can reason from what is not fact. Men's bodies usually begin to lose their elasticity, their capability of sustaining prolonged labour, or exerting great speed of motion, between forty and fifty. But it is something rare to find a healthy man's intellect decline so early. On the contrary, men usually feel themselves capable of sounder thinking and discernment, at sixty, than at any prior period of their lives. Nay, we have instances of high intellectual power displayed by men of fourscore.

Some of you will remember some very excellent observations of Lord Brougham on this subject, in his 'Discourse of Natural Theology'—which is now prefixed to the best edition of Paley. Lord Brougham was, himself, a living proof, at fourscore, of the correctness of his own reasoning. Lord Lyndhurst, and many other Law-lords, with many states-

men, authors, artists and philosophers, might be named, as corroborating the important truth, that our intellectual faculties do not usually decline in vigour as early as the strength of our bodies declines.

I must ask you to reflect, also, on another fact, which is treated with his usual force, by the great reasoner I mentioned to you, a few minutes ago. A mortal disease may be going on in the bodily system of a man, for many months: it is advancing most surely: its progress cannot be stopped; but the man's intellectual powers are not affected, up to the moment of his sudden death. "In these diseases," observes Butler, "persons the moment before death appear to be in the highest vigour of life. They discover apprehension, memory, reason, all entire; with the utmost force of affection; sense of character, of shame and honour; and the highest mental enjoyments and sufferings, even to the last gasp: and these surely prove even greater vigour of life than bodily strength does. Now, what pretence is there for thinking that a progressive disease when arrived to such a degree—I mean, that degree which is mortal—will destroy those powers

which were not impaired, which were not affected by it, during its whole progress up to that degree? And, if death, by diseases of this kind, is not the destruction of our present reflecting powers, it will scarcely be thought that death by any other means is."

So far from death being the termination of our conscious existence, is it not rational to suppose it may be merely a change that we must necessarily pass through in order to reach a higher state of existence? How different was our mode of life in the womb compared with our state in infancy;—and how different was our state in infancy, when we might rather be termed creatures of sensation than beings of intelligence, compared with our mature human life. And may not death introduce us to another and yet higher state of intelligence and consciousness?

Many of you, I fear, are now without any degree of belief that may be called an assurance of a future life. But you will not tell me that you wish for no such assurance: that you care nothing about it. I knew a few, in the dark days of my own unbelief, who said they cared nothing about

death, and did not wish for another life after the present. But they were not really intelligent men. They were of the gross and sensual order of unbelievers. The purer and higher minds—the more cultivated free-thinkers that I knew—told a different tale. They acknowledged that they felt as I felt, in my doubt:—that I would choose to encounter pain for ever, rather than sink into annihilation. And, thus, they expressed a throbbing sympathy with the sentiments that Milton puts into the splendid oratory of that speech of Belial, in the second book of 'Paradise Lost':

——"for who would lose,
"Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
"These thoughts that wander through eternity,
"To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
"In the wide womb of uncreated night,
"Devoid of sense and motion!"

I am addressing intellectual men, I trust: not the mere slaves of animalism: and your minds respond to these sentiments. You do not feel indifferent and careless about existence. Much less, do you wish to cease to think, and cease to be. You cannot look on annihilation without a

shudder. Whatever a future state may be, you would rather live in it, than be no more. You have no passion for annihilation.

Although you are often wearied with bodily toil, is not existence pleasant here? Some of you may have no sense of the beauty and grandeur of Nature—but you are not all dull and blind to the glories of the outward creation. It would be a saddening thought to many of you,—if you knew that Death was close at hand, and you would never again see the glorious sun 'tip the hills with gold' in the morning, nor behold him set in regal, but departing splendour in the evening;—that you would never again see the queenly moon silver the clouds with brightness, nor the stars, "so wildly, spiritually bright," begem the deep blue arch at midnight;—that you would never again tread the green carpet of the earth, spread with daisies, nor witness the joys of children, as they gather the primroses and blue bells of the spring;—that you would never again feel the glory and radiance of summer, nor see autumn put on her robes of russet and gold, and take her throne amid the gorgeous tapestry of the oaks and beeches and pines of the

forest;—that you would never again gaze on dear old Earth's beloved panorama of mountain and lake and river, and hill and dale, and field and wood;—that you would never again hear the sweet carol of the lark—the golden flute of the blackbird—the vernal shout of the cuckoo—and the hum of gladsome bees;—never again witness the sport of lambs "scattering the wild briar roses into snow;"—never again gaze at that magnificent picture of the superb arching of a horse's neck, the proud prancing of his feet, and the grace of his form and action;—that you would never again see the smiling faces of your children, nor the loving eyes of your wife;—never again hear the dear voice of your mother, nor receive the blessing of your reverend father;—never again clasp the friend of your boyhood and your youth by the hand;—never again hear the voice of friendship or of love;—never again join in exciting and inspiring converse with your intellectual friends,

"and reason high
"Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate:
"Fixed fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute;
"And find no end, in wandering mazes lost"—

(for to know and feel, after all our debates and discussions on such subjects, that we cannot answer our own questions, seems to be the greatest charm of the debate)—never learn another fact about science—about the secrets of chemistry and electricity, and the wonders of astronomy.

One has sometimes heard conceited speakers assure their audiences that the Future State had been rendered utterly impossible by the discoveries of Science;—that the Christian Heaven, so long doted on by religious people, had been swept away by the revelations of astronomy—for there was no room for one in the Universe, with its countless suns, its planetary systems, its comets, and its nebular bodies.

But does not such a declaration seem very odd, when you come to think about it? No room in the Universe for a Heaven! Surely, all these wondrous revelations of astronomy seem to provide us with more and more room. What! are there so many millions of stars in the Milky Way—stars which are suns of other planetary systems—and is there no room anywhere among them all, for a Heaven?—What! neither among our old acquain-

tances, the Pleiades—nor in ruddy Aldebaran—nor in silvery Vega—nor in huge Arcturus—nor in still huger Sirius—nor in any member of the giant constellation Orion—nor in any of the innumerable planets that may be revolving around these bodies? No room for Heaven anywhere! Surely all these grand revelations of Astronomy assure us that there is room in the Universe not only for one heaven, but for ten thousand heavens, if we need them.

And is the Universe boundless—(for you cannot conceive the contrary)—and yet, when you die here, you are never to know any more of it? Existence—conscious existence—is to be experienced and enjoyed by millions, in the ages after your death; but you are to be extinct—to be annihilated: you are to be cut off from all conscious ness—for ever! Can you bear to look at that unmoved and unaffected? You cannot, if you have any mind at all.

Is existence so desirable to me—a man of threescore and ten—and do you young men feel unsaddened at the thought of parting with it? "Give me my youth again!" I often wish, with poor

Byron. I seem to have experienced so little pain and sorrow compared with the enjoyment life has afforded me, that I often think I should like to begin even this life over again. But when I think of my Saviour's promise—"I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"—oh, what unspeakable anguish, what indescribable sorrow should I feel, if I were assured that I should never realise His blessed promise—never be with Him! My present life, and all my past life, would seem like a mockery of existence. I should not be able to see any meaning in it. It would fill me with despair and disgust; and, in our common English phrase, so homely, yet so full of meaning, "I should not know what to do with myself!"

And you, workingmen, who have any power of reflection, cannot fail to wish for existence in the future—to know what you cannot know here—and what you wish the future to reveal.

But, where is your hope for this? What teacher promises you a future life, beyond the grave? Not Socrates or Plato; for they were not sure of

it themselves. Not Auguste Comte, or Strauss, or Renan, with their belief in annihilation. Not John Stuart Mill, who had no belief in a future state for himself. You will search in vain for the doctrine of a future state throughout the entire cyclopædia of scepticism.

It is upon Christ alone that you can lean for the assurance of a future life. He is the only teacher who says "If I live, ye shall live also";—the only teacher who delivers the precious consolation to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you; and I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, ye may be also;"—the only teacher who utters the momentous proclamation, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

"And are we to be assured by words only?" do you ask?

Nay, by deeds—by mighty deeds. He who uttered these words hath burst the bonds of Death. He rose again from the dead, and hath ascended up on high, leading captivity captive—conquering

Death the great conqueror—and hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also. He who declared He would rise again on the third day redeemed His word.

Are these facts—veritable facts? Then, since Jesus rose from the dead and has passed into the eternal state, it is possible that you and I may also live, hereafter. And, if these be facts, I again appeal to you whether you are not bound to enquire into them. I conjure you, search—enquire—prove the truth of it all, for yourselves. Do not relapse into the mental sloth which may have possessed you ever since you became sceptical—the old listless indifference and unwillingness to get on a fresh track of thought. I know what it is—I remember it, too well; and how almost universally this mental sloth characterises the mind which has sunk into unbelief. I entreat you, gird up the loins of the mind, and now resolve to enter on this great and momentous enquiry, in thorough earnest.

XIII.

THE WAY TO REACH THE TRUTH RESPECTING THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, AND FOR THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

START, on this great enquiry, just where you are, now. Commence it, at this moment.

1. Remind yourselves that it is a fact as positive as your own existence—that, at the present moment, many millions of men, in the most highly civilised parts of the world, believe that Christ's human existence, holy life, miracles, death, and resurrection, were veritable realities witnessed on this earth, more than eighteen hundred years ago.

2. Trace this fact of belief, century by century up through the ages, till you come upon the time when St. Paul was preaching and writing, Paul who—the most eminent of sceptical teachers assures you—was a real human existence, living at the time he is said to have lived, and preaching and

teaching as the New Testament declares that he taught and preached. Paul, the writer—according to Strauss—of the epistle to the Romans, the two epistles to the Corinthians, and the epistle to the Galatians. Paul, the writer—according to Renan—not only of these epistles, but of six others: two to the Thessalonians, and those to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

3. Next, make yourselves certain of this fact: that the most diligent and accurate critics assure us that the earliest of the epistles—those to the Thessalonians—were written but twenty years, and the latest—that to the Philippians—but twenty-nine years, after the Crucifixion.

4. Take note, that in these epistles Paul not only asserts his own belief of the truth of Christianity, but the belief of the persons to whom he is writing: that is to say of some thousands of persons.

5. Observe that, in his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul affirms that Jesus of Nazareth was seen, after his resurrection from the dead, not only by himself (Paul, the writer of the letter); but *twice* by 'the twelve,' or the Apostles; by above five hundred persons at once, of whom the greater

number were still alive; and, also, separately, by the apostles Peter and James, with whom Paul also assures us, in his letter to the Galatians, that he had conversed, at Jerusalem.

6. The Apostles having been named, this may lead you to study the evidence for the Resurrection of Christ contained in the Four Gospels and the Acts.

7. But another search remains. Trace out the mention of Christ's Resurrection, in the Epistles of Paul, and bring home to your minds the truth, that there could have been no Christianity without the Resurrection of Christ: that if He had not risen from the dead His very name might have been forgotten: for Jesus could not have been the Christ, if He had not risen from the dead. His Messiahship, His Atonement for the sins of the world—His Intercession—all that is vital to us in the very name of Jesus of Nazareth—rest on the verity of His resurrection from the dead.

Listen to a few of the passages containing mention of the Resurrection of Christ, from the epistle to the Romans, only; and trace out the other passages for yourselves:—

"Declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by *the resurrection from the dead*"—"If we believe on Him who *raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*, who was delivered for our offences, and was *raised again* for our justification"—"Christ *was raised from the dead*, by the glory of the Father"—"Christ *being raised from the dead*, dieth no more"—"If the spirit of Him that *raised up Jesus from the dead* dwell in you, He that *raised up Christ from the dead* shall also quicken your mortal bodies"—"It is Christ that died, yea, rather, *that is risen again*, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

And now, in conclusion, I feel that I must speak a few plain words to you—so plain that I hope you will never forget them, while you live.

I have been appealing to you, my sceptical friends, simply as men of understanding, as advocates of reason, hitherto. I have addressed myself to your perception of duty—but it has only been your duty to enquire into Christian Evidence. I wish you were all thinkers but some of you are

too easily persuaded, rather than convinced. It is not to the vigour of your rational and logical faculties that the scepticism of some of you is attributable. Scoffs and sneers and corrupt example have prevailed with too many of you. You know that I am telling you the truth; and I say it with sorrow. But, of whatever kind the influence has been which has destroyed your reverence for religion and your belief in it—whether mere scoffing, or pernicious reasoning have made you unbelievers, you must now permit me to lay bare the stronger reason why I urge you all to enter on an earnest consideration of Christian Evidence.

It is not that you may reach the truth, and be content with an idle credence of it. I hold that you are moral agents—that you are to live after the present life—and I want you to feel assured of the verity of Christ's resurrection, that you may feel assured of the reality of a future and endless life.

If you have thrown off all belief in a future state —and, I fear, it is the case with too many of you; if you believe the present life will be the limit of your conscious existence—you must feel that you are, practically, classing yourselves entirely with the

animals. You are here for no purpose—for there was no purpose in your creation. You *happen* to be here: that is all you can say. It does not matter how you live, for—as your teachers say—you are, each of you, only a superior ape: a little higher in organization than a dog; and you will die like a dog, and be no more! Your belief does not ennoble you; but it degrades you:—and if you can look upon your condition only for a moment, it must fill you with disgust for your own miserable existence. You refuse to acknowledge your moral nature and your responsibility to the Moral Governor of the world; and yet you are not able to kill Conscience: it *will* rise and accuse you, in spite of all your attempts to stifle it.

Why should you live in this unhappy condition? Thousands of our race live in the happy belief that they are something more than mere animals: that they owe their existence to the Everlasting One Who had a loving purpose in bringing them into existence, and wills that they should be happy for ever.

"We do not wish to be slaves of superstition," I hear you say.

Nor am I inviting you to accept any superstition. I hate it, too thoroughly. I have warred against it, all my life. No, no ! I shall never counsel you to seek a priest, and confess your sins to him, and perform the penance he imposes on you, in order that you may receive absolution at his hands. I do not advise you to exchange one slavery for another. I urge you to preserve your own mental freedom, and to exercise it now and henceforth, in the pursuit of truth.

It is not by a passing thought—a mere momentary consideration—that you can realise the intense importance of the fact that you are moral agents—that you are responsible creatures. And yet many of you have never given more than a passing thought to this all-important fact. Since you so often feel the reproach of Conscience, when you have transgressed that sense of Duty which you cannot throw off any more than you can throw off your skin—dare you say that you are blameless in never giving half-an-hour's serious thought to this great question of your moral nature? I charge you to take the question *home.*

Do not think that, while I talk thus plainly to

you, I have no feeling for the disabilities under which you labour, as toiling men. Remember, that I, as well as you, have known what it is to toil with the hands till the weariness of the body disables the mind for thinking. Remember that I have felt what deprivation is; and that I have seen others pine for lack of food, because there was no work, — and become too much distracted and maddened by despair, to be able to think about anything but the means of satisfying their hunger. Do not suppose that I can be without sympathy for every human being who is not only in a servile condition, but is made to feel it, and to feel that he must endure it, or he and his family must perish for lack of food.

I know it is hard to be urged to *think*, when you are overpowered by labour, and need sleep. I do not wonder that the young, especially, feel it to be no abuse of time and existence, but a proceeding of common-sense, to walk out in the air, or join in active sports, rather than read and think—when their labour, as human dray-horses in the mill, is at an end, for the day, or the week. I do not wonder when I hear you say "Let them think that

have time for it, and nought else to do: we must stretch our limbs, and get a mouthful of fresh air."

I wish I could support your plea, fully; and exonerate you from all blame. My strong sympathy with your class would impel me to do it. But, I dare not. The evil—the guilty evil—which pervades the manufacturing districts of this country, forbids it. Thousands of you cannot find time to enquire studiously into the truth of Christianity—but you can spend hours in the perusal of pages which tend not only to harden you in unbelief, but to make you brazen apologists for the vilest sensualism.

I yearn with pity over numbers of you who have only just passed from childhood to youth, and whose minds are poisoned with the deadly tracts and pamphlets actively circulated by a low sceptical propaganda. I know that you have, in many instances, unwittingly strayed into the nets spread by your older associates, who imagine that they are acting wisely in filling your minds with the unbelief and looseness which poison their own. I cannot address you harshly. In hundreds of instances, others are more faulty than yourselves—

for they drew you into the evil condition which you did not seek.

What do you young people feel, when you permit yourselves to reflect—if you ever do reflect? It may be you were religiously taught and instructed by your humble parents in childhood; and they little expected that you would sadden their hearts by joining the ranks of Unbelief. If you have really thrown off the restraints of religion, and sunk into vice—you know you are wrong. All the Socialist and Secularist cant which reaches your ears, about your being 'creatures of circumstance,' and mere impressible subjects of all the influences around you, cannot lull you to peace of mind. The dread power of Conscience, I repeat, will assert itself, notwithstanding all you may do, and others may do, to stifle its dictates within you.

And if you continue to sin against Conscience, you can only sink into deeper degradation of your moral nature. Older sinners may teach you to laugh at what I am saying; but, I charge you, use your own powers of observation. Do you not see that the scoffers are degraded beings? Do you really wish to resemble them?—to have no more

regard for purity of mind and chastity of life, than they have? If you sink into utter moral degradation, how do you think you will meet death?

I know what older sceptics will tell you:—that they have known many unbelievers die calmly and determinedly, with the avowal that they felt no fear of death. Do not covet the power to die in that manner,—for such a death is fearful, if Christianity be true, and a never-ending conscious existence is to follow the present.

"Do you really mean to tell us that there is an everlasting hell-fire for sinners," some of you will ask, "although many Christian teachers are now declaring that doctrine to be a lamentable error?"

I reply, that I cannot find that Christ, or any other teacher in the New Testament, says that there will be a termination to the punishment of the wicked, in the Future State; and, therefore, I dare not say that to you. I do not assume to myself the right to unchristianize men who teach that there will, eventually, be an end of all evil and all suffering in God's universe. I know some of them to be very noble, very conscientious, and true-hearted men; and I should feel it to be a mean,

guilty act to try to create a suspicion of their uprightness. Eternity—'for ever'—*is a long chalk!*—and it would be monstrous presumption in me, or any other poor insignificant mortal to dare to say what God intends to do with His sinful moral agents 'for ever'—*if He had told us nothing about it.* Let not that be forgotten.

But what Christ himself says seems very clear. "And these," he declares in the last verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, "shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." It is the same Greek word αἰώνιον which is rendered 'everlasting' and 'eternal' in this text. Objectors to the doctrine of endless punishment urge that the simple meaning of the Greek word is neither 'eternal' nor 'everlasting,' but only 'age-lasting.' But we see that this word is applied, in this text, both to punishment and reward; and I can only understand Christ to mean that punishment and reward are to be of the same duration, in the Future State. None of us can think that Christ means the reward of the righteous is to terminate, in the lapse of ages: then, what right have I to conclude that the

punishment of the wicked shall terminate? Christ gives me no authority for such a conclusion; and, therefore, I dare not come to it, myself—much less teach it to others. May God save us all from the punishment, and bring us all 'into life eternal'! —let us all humbly pray. If we lay hold of the saving truth of Christ we shall be safe ourselves; and it may keep us from tormenting anxiety about others, when we remember that the 'Judge of all the earth' *must do right.*

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